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NATIONAL REVIEW

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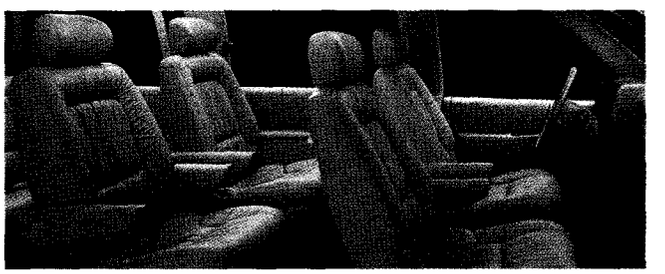

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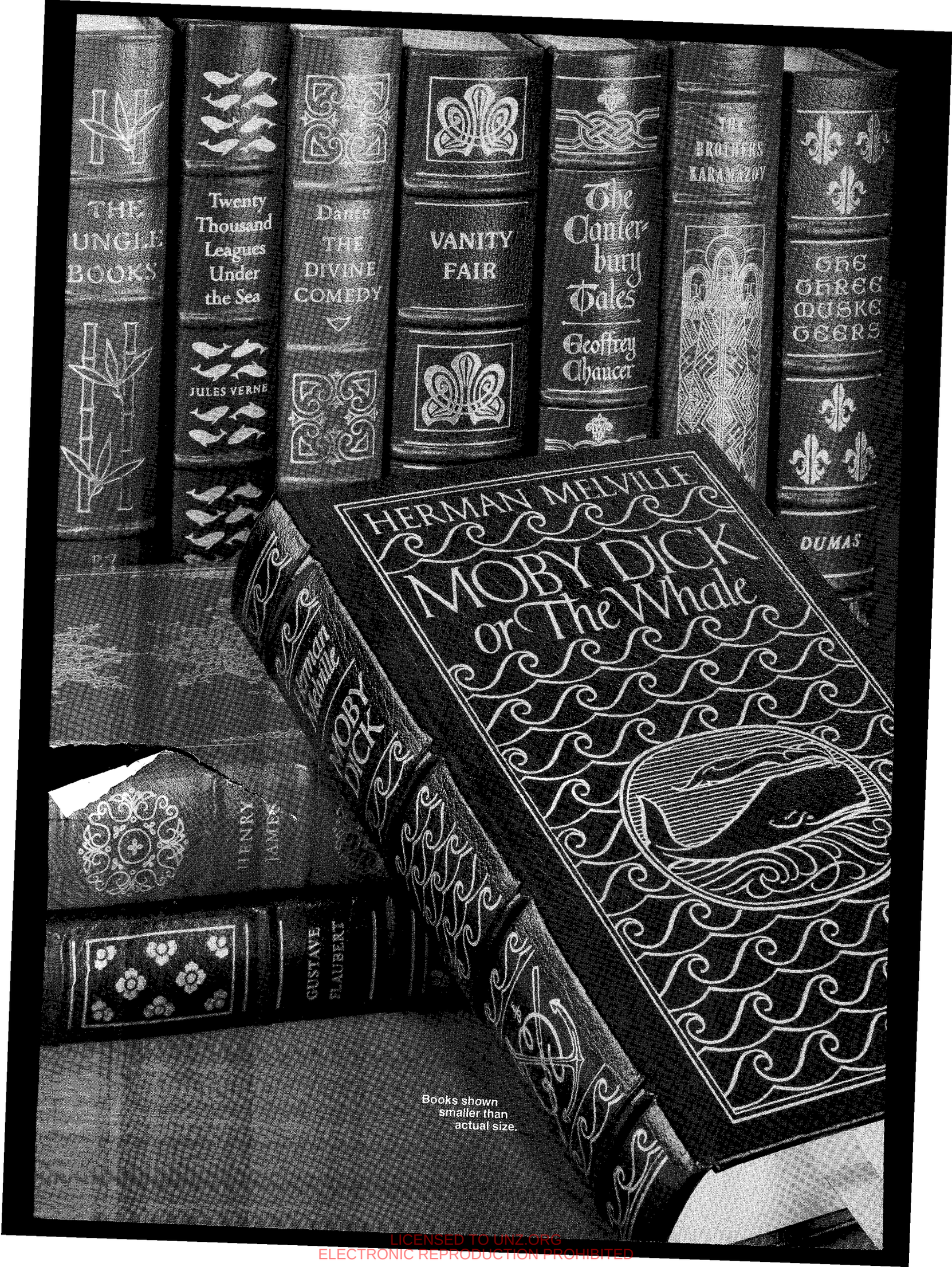

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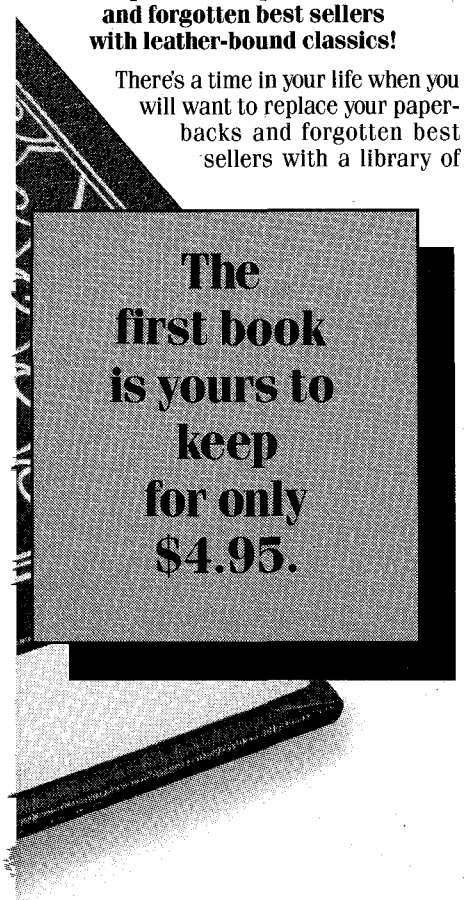

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LETTERS

Lend Him an Ear

In the issue of December 14, Mr. John Simon, your film reviewer, writes, "I am about to confess that I know of no sounds less bearable than those of baroque music" ["Not for Enlightened Buddhists"]. He is talking about everything from the *Messiah* to *The Art of the Fugue*, leaving us with no alternative than greatly to fear for the reliability of his hearing. Permit me to suggest to the admirable Mr. Simon that he should read aloud the sentence I have quoted. He will then have heard sounds incomparably uglier than the least successful two bars of baroque music composed after that magical year of 1685 when Bach, Scarlatti, and Handel were all three born, to create forever a brighter world, for those who can hear. Those who cannot, should not undertake musical criticism.

Wm. F. Buckley Jr.
New York, N.Y.

Tax-Reform Bust

Paul Craig Roberts's "Economic Dominoes" [Nov. 30] never addressed the basic economic principle of supply and demand. Instead he blamed the S&L collapse on the 1986 Tax Reform Act and criticized attempts by the FSLIC to seek legal remedies against former directors of the failed institutions.

The collapse in the real-estate market was a function of an oversupply of commercial real estate and a weak demand for occupancy. This situation still exists, with metropolitan areas continuing to have substantial vacant office space, despite rock-bottom lease rates, and blocks of empty condominiums.

Prior to 1986 investors were intoxicated with projects that had the sole purpose of generating tax losses and had no hope for positive cash flows for an entire decade. The only chance for capital appreciation rested with steep inflation. Real-estate values were artificially inflated by accelerated depreciation rates.

The 1986 Tax Reform Act did accelerate the evaporation of the artificially government-created real-estate wealth. But without this legislation nonsensical financing of investment properties would have continued, a deeper depression based on continued construction would have occurred, and additional worthless real-estate loans causing more defunct S&Ls would be widening the deficit.

Mr. Roberts expects liability clemency for the directors who approved the outrageous business transactions of the defunct S&Ls. Not only did these directors approve the loans for these doomed commercial properties, but the defunct S&Ls in many instances took ownership interests in these projects.

Neglect and ignorance of fundamental business principles is no reason to excuse these directors from civil liability for investing federally insured funds in high-risk ventures.

Richard M. Lucas
Parkland, Fla.

In 1986 the government claimed that the real-estate provisions in the Tax Reform Act would raise billions of dollars in revenues. Instead, the provisions collapsed real-estate values, resulting in a $500-billion taxpayer bailout of federal deposit insurance. The government had to find a scapegoat—the S&L industry and the professionals that serve it. Somehow all of these people suddenly turned out to be crooks or mental defectives.

Mr. Lucas does not recognize this scapegoating because he believes the sudden collapse in commercial real-estate values (during an economic expansion) was caused by "oversupply of commercial real estate and a weak demand for occupancy." He fails to consider that the quantity demanded is a function of price. The projected rents had no prospect of carrying the costs of the projects once "tax preferences" were withdrawn. The properties have to fall in value until new owners can operate them profitably under harsher tax treatment.

Real-estate prices reflected the prevailing depreciation, tax deductions, and capital-gains tax rate. A building that must be depreciated over 31 years is not worth as much as an identical building that can be depreciated in 19 years. The 1986 tax reform radically altered, retroactively, the tax factors that affect real-estate prices. Mr. Lucas is mistaken in his view that the current tax treatment is somehow correct, while the previous one was not. The useful life of an asset is not predictable, and the case for expensing of investments is strong.

Mr. Lucas thinks the real-estate boom was driven by the opportunity to generate tax losses. However even a tax shelter has to make economic sense or tax losses become real losses.

The real-estate boom that led to overbuilding was driven by expectations as Ronald Reagan came to power that tax cuts and deficits would further inflate an already inflated economy. Investors sought inflation hedges, and real estate had a proven record. As I state in my article, these expectations proved to be wrong, and real-estate prices were "already under pressure from unexpected disinflation" prior to enactment of the Tax Reform Act. There have been many periods of overbuilding during economic booms, but never before has the deposit-insurance fund collapsed. What was different this time is that tax changes reduced real-estate values at the onset of a real-estate recession. —PCR

No Liberal He

The election post-mortem issue of *NR* [Nov. 30] was most interesting—especially for those of us who live overseas. However, I think you are mistaken in calling George Bush a liberal or moderate Republican. Liberal Republicans, however wrongheaded, at least believe in *something*. If Bush believed in anything except getting re-elected, it didn't come across. During the campaign, he kept trying on issues like a guy buying a sweater in a department store.

Jack Kirwan
Nagoya, Japan

Baltic Minorities

I was very disappointed in your alleging "blatant discrimination" against Russian minorities in the Baltic states ["The Week," Nov. 30]. You seem to have forgotten that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania regained independence after illegal annexation by the Soviet Union, which had sent a significant portion of Balts to Siberia, while a wholesale influx of Russians was implemented.

In Latvia only about 53 per cent of the population is Latvian. If not granting instant, automatic citizenship is "blatant discrimination" then you may have a point. However, it seems reasonable that some length of residence and minimal language proficiency may be required to qualify for citizenship. In any case there is no program to deny residents any basic rights.

Aivars Kuplis
Arlington Heights, Il.

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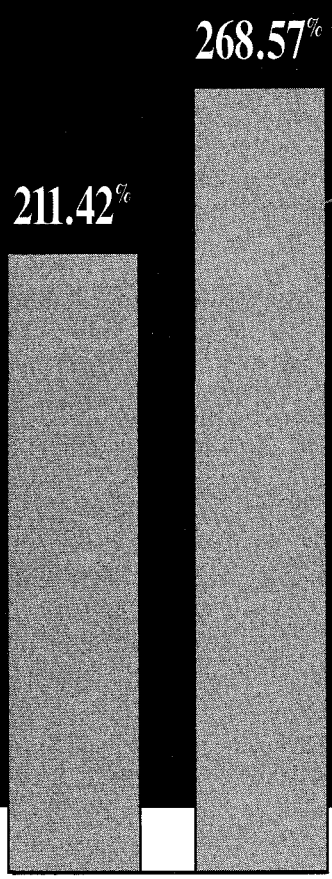

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FROM THE EDITOR

On the Beach

■ What should be the role of the United Nations in the Somalia crisis? Or in the Bosnian crisis? Or in whatever New World Order emerges out of the post-cold-war chaos?

Most conservatives retain their suspicion of the UN as a anti-Western Third World circus. But others, notably Paul Johnson in a recent *NR*, envisage a UN-minus-the-Soviet-veto as a decisive player in world affairs, intervening militarily in crises like Bosnia, for instance, and even establishing trusteeships to govern countries manifestly unable to govern themselves like Somalia.

Of course, different conservatives mean different UNs. What its critics dislike is the UN General Assembly with its built-in Third World majority and anti-American demagoguery. What its supporters endorse is the UN Security Council which, with its permanent member vetoes and monopoly of military initiatives, is the traditional Concert of Great Powers in modern social democratic dress.

Here two facts of power come into play. Nothing can now be done by the UN in the world unless the United States approves of it. But the U.S. can do a great deal more in the world if it has the blessing of the UN.

That is less because of "world opinion," which is impotent where it is not mythical, than because of U.S. domestic opinion. For mysterious but irritating reasons, many Americans will approve of U.S. intervention abroad only if it has a UN endorsement.

Why they should prefer the collective judgment of 160 or so corrupt unelected tyrants to that of their own democratic government beats me. Fortunately, however, that doesn't matter much since a UN decision actually reflects the judgment of the U.S., its Western allies, and whatever Third World countries on the Security Council it is felt necessary to bribe.

So the role of the UN in the world is to give respectable camouflage to U.S. foreign policy for the benefit of American liberal opinion. It follows therefore that, in crises like Bosnia and Somalia, the UN must reflect U.S. policy, not the other way round—especially when all the heavy lifting is being done by Americans.

My only anxiety is: Does the U.S. government realize this?

■ Every year *The American Spectator* invites me to nominate books for Christmas, and every year I am still reading feverishly when everyone else's favorites are published. This year, however, I have decided not to waste the hours of intellectual sunbathing on a Grenada beach.

Paul Johnson's *The Birth of the Modern* gives a wonderfully comprehensive portrait of the years 1815 to 1830, and of how those years saw the beginnings both of world society and of the modern consciousness.

Does that make it sound somewhat dull? Not a bit: there is a fascinating anecdote, a witty epigram, and an arresting insight on every page.

Simon Schama's *Citizens*, a "chronicle" of the French Revolution, is wonderfully old-fashioned history except in its scrupulous attention to the most recent research: a vivid technicolored account of Great Men and Great Events rather than a dry predestined outcome of social trends and economic forces. Nor does Professor Schama gloss over the horrible violence which the Revolution entailed and which, as he regretfully concedes, was perhaps always its inner drive.

Finally, Anthony Trollope's *Ralph the Heir*, a brilliant social comedy about class and sex in Victorian England. Trollope's "villain" is not a moustache-twirling black-hearted seducer without a single decent impulse, but a weak, improvident, shallow young man whose follies propel him into proposing marriage (or almost doing so) to four young women in the course of the plot. Someone, as Trollope himself said, just like you.

—JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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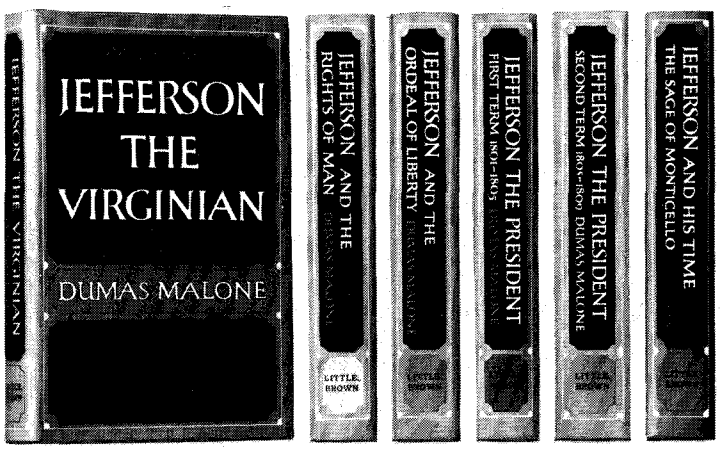

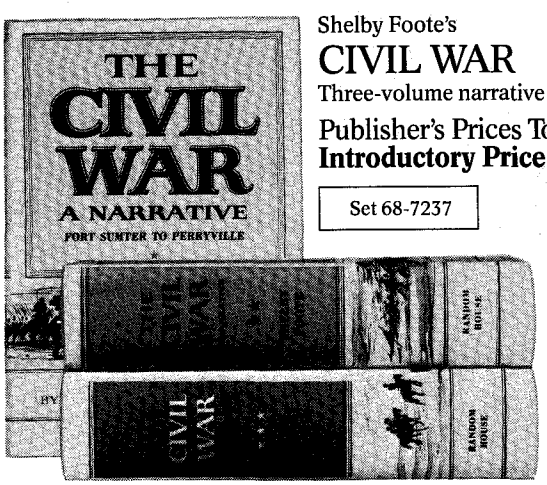

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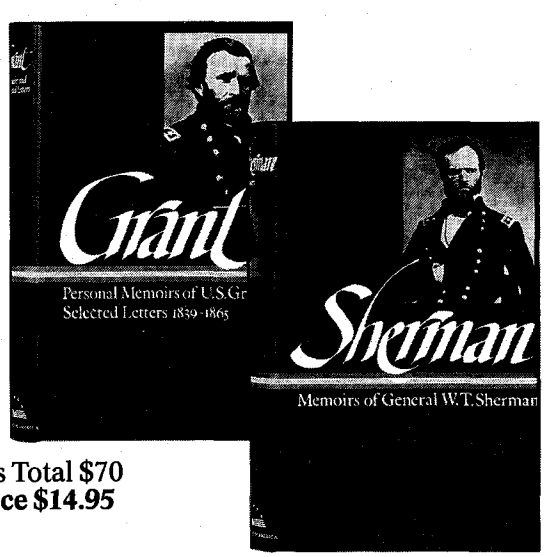

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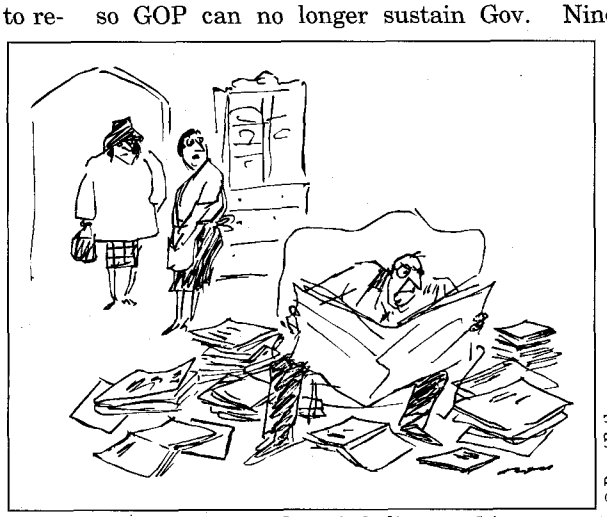
FOR THE RECORD

■ **Clinton** team pleasantly surprised at press treatment of Administration nominees. *U.S. News & World Report* reveals transition officials were nervous about questioning **Robert Rubin** might receive concerning extensive contributions to new boss's campaign and his management of blind trust of Treasury Secretary–designate **Lloyd Bentsen**. No such questions were forthcoming. . . . *Newsweek* calls **Laura Tyson**, who will head Council of Economic Advisors, "the only real liberal" among Clinton's economic choices. **Leon Panetta**, however, selected to be director of OMB, has ACU rating of 5, ADA of 95. National Taxpayers Union rates congressmen in terms of whether votes cut spending and size of government: Bentsen's rating is 19, Panetta's 21, out of possible 100. Both qualify for "Big Spender" category. Bentsen's ADA rating rose from 44 in 1990 to 80 a year later. Both were architects of 1990 budget deal. . . . **Donna Shalala**, named to head HHS, recently called American society "racist and sexist." When she took over as U. of Wisc. president her first priority was to double number of minority students and faculty; she failed. . . . Choice for U.S. Surgeon General, Arkansas Department of Health chief **Jocelyn Elders**, has clear idea "what we can do most to reduce infant mortality": "reduce unplanned, unwanted children. . . . [Right to lifers] should get over their love affair with the fetus." . . . Spelman College president **Johnetta Cole**, currently transition education coordinator, has been widely assailed (except by far Left) for support of Communist dictatorships in Cuba, Grenada, and elsewhere. She was once member of Havana-sponsored Venceremos Brigade and of Moscow-backed U.S. Peace Council. Senior Clinton transition official says, "I don't know what the U.S. Peace Council is" and "I don't see the relevance." . . . There's a battle over Middle East policy positions between pro-Israel **Martin Indyk**, head of esteemed Washington Institute for Near East Policy, and **Samuel Berger**, affiliated with dovish Americans for Peace now.

■ Senators **Nancy Kassebaum** and **Arlen Specter**, retiring Rep. **Tom Campbell**, and others announced formation of Republican Majority Coalition, which aims to curb prominence of conservative social issues in party. Rep. Campbell (Calif.), defeated by unabashed conservative **Bruce Herschensohn** in Senate primary, says coalition's purpose is "to exclude issues of morality and conscience as litmus tests of being a Republican." . . . House conservatives irked at Minority Whip **Newt Gingrich** for supporing liberal **Nancy Johnson** (Conn.; ACU: 50) for various Republican leadership posts, of which she won none. . . . "Clinton had no coattails," says **Jeffrey Wice**, counsel to the Democratic State Legislative Leaders Association. In 1980 **Ronald Reagan**'s tails helped GOP pick up over 200 state legislative seats. Clinton victory was accompanied by a 70-seat *Republican* gain. . . . Meanwhile, in Massachusetts Republicans lost six State Senate seats—so GOP can no longer sustain Gov. **William Weld**'s vetoes without help from Democrats. Weld, touted as GOP presidential timber, said recently White House "doesn't look like something I'd be interested in." Meanwhile, Rep. **Joe Kennedy** is looking to unseat Weld in 1994. Recent poll has Weld ahead 46 to 41.



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"For a man who doesn't believe a thing he reads, he reads a lot."

■ Cuba is among the shrinking number of countries deemed "not free" in Freedom House's 1993 *Survey of Freedom in the World*. There are now 38 countries in that category, down from 42 in 1992. Undaunted, **Castro**-organized mob flogged human-rights advocate **Elizardo Sánchez**, then harassed and harangued **Alvaro Prendes**, who has been calling on El Comandante to open political dialogue. . . . In Iran, also "not free," first divorce was okayed; now women can sue divorced husband for wages for past housework. . . . Splitting Czech and Slovak Republics plan to abandon national health care, instituted under Communist rule, and switch to free-market approach.

■ **George Bush** will award Presidential Medal of Freedom to **Ronald Reagan**. . . . American Legislative Exchange Council gives first **Warren Brookes** Award for Journalistic Excellence to *NR* contributing editor **Paul Craig Roberts**. . . . Former Reagan speechwriters **Clark Judge**, **Josh Gilder**, **Peter Robinson**, and **John Podhoretz** have opened Washington-based White House Writers Group, which offers its speechwriting talents to private sector. . . . Vice President **Quayle's** chief of staff **Bill Kristol** will direct "Bradley Project for the Nineties," sponsored by the **Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation** of Milwaukee. . . . National Journalism Center is accepting applications for 12-week session beginning February 22. Application deadline is February 5. Contact **M. Stanton Evans**, **Chris Warden**, or **Mal Kline** at 800 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002; 202-544-1333.

■ Outraged citizens outside a Vienna, Va., Christmas pageant, rendered religion-free by a court, displayed banner: "ACLU is jealous of a manger scene because it does not have three wise men or a virgin in *its* organization."

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THE WEEK

■ Just because George Bush spent the last year and a half denying the recession, that doesn't mean Bill Clinton has to spend the next year and a half denying the recovery.

■ Forty-seven freshmen Republican congressmen, all self-described outsiders, have concluded their first two weeks in Washington. They were a welcome reinforcement for House conservatives and gave Bob Michel and his senior party colleagues a Maalox moment. Fresh from the campaign trail, they provided the margin of victory for a conservative sweep of the contested House leadership races and voted unanimously to limit the terms of committees' ranking members. The freshman agenda includes the balanced-budget amendment and line-item veto, reduced federal spending, term limits, and cuts in congressional perks and staff. This platform represents a frontal assault on business as usual, and the freshmen returned home having won their first skirmish. Early standouts include Bill Baker and Richard Pombo of California and John Linder of Georgia. This new conservative phalanx promises a new experience for Hill Republicans: an Opposition that will really oppose.

■ Of course, there's no lack of Republicans who want to oppose other Republicans. Retiring Congressman Tom Campbell and Senators Nancy Landon Kassebaum, Arlen Specter, John Chafee, and William Cohen held a press conference in Washington to announce the formation of the Republican Majority Coalition. The coalition wants to make the GOP once again the party of Lincoln—by curbing the power of the Religious Right. "Our purpose," said Representative Campbell in an unconsciously candid moment, "is to exclude issues of morality and conscience as litmus tests of being a Republican." That would mean removing the statue of the man who attacked Stephen Douglas for not caring "whether slavery is voted up or down." Clue: Midwestern politician, beginning with "L." (Not "Landon.")

■ Joshua Muravchik, a Scoop Jackson Democrat and longtime human-rights champion, has been considered a top candidate to be Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. Now Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, and others nostalgic for Patt Derian seek to block Muravchik because he committed the crime of applying the human-rights yardstick to leftist as well as rightist regimes. This complaint exemplies the kind of "moral equivalence"—that anti-Communism is as bad as Communism—that drove many centrist Democrats out of their party and into the Reagan coalition. Their struggle continues.

■ The expression "good enough for government work" takes on new meaning with the appointment of Bill Clinton's childhood chum, Thomas F. McLarty, as White House chief of staff. As CEO of Arkla Inc., Mr. McLarty presided serenely over a steady stream of business setbacks and miscalculations. Despite a generally rising stock market, Arkla stock plummeted from 20⅞ a share in 1989 to just 8¼ at the time of his White House appointment. Things got so bad that the company was forced to increase its debt load just to pay dividends. He'll like Washington, a town where they increase the debt load without paying dividends.

■ For the better part of a dozen years, a collection of kooks, ex-Carter aides, and Democrats—to the extent they are distinguishable—have been pursuing the "October Surprise," the Oliver Stone–like theory that the Iranian government delayed release of American hostages in 1980 at the behest of the Reagan campaign. Secret meetings in Washington, Paris, and Madrid supposedly brought together a cast of characters including arms dealers, spies, William Casey, and George Bush. Well, two months before the 1992 election, a House task force looking into the October Surprise issued a preliminary report declaring that Mr. Bush never left the country on the dates when theorists had him winging to rendezvous. Three weeks after the election, a Senate inquiry, though it accused Casey of an unhealthy interest in the crisis, found that the sources of the Surprise theory were "wholly unreliable"; that later arms sales to Iran "can be fully and reasonably explained without resorting to the theory of a Republican–Iranian deal"; and that the "great weight of evidence is that there was no such deal." Are the conspiracy peddlers embarrassed? Not at all. The *New York Times*, which gave former Carter aide Gary Sick almost a whole op-ed page to spin the tale, concluded that his fantasies were simply "not proven." The title to a *Washington Post* article by Robert Parry, a reporter for *Frontline*, another Sick outlet, said "real questions linger." Meanwhile Sick himself is producing a paper on the Middle East for the Clinton transition team. Look out for leaks to the *National Enquirer*.

■ WALSH WATCH #247. The Special Prosecutor's lat-

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est victim is Clair George, a former top CIA official, whose recent conviction on two counts of lying to Congress is vintage Walsh. "It's called piling on," said Elliott Abrams, a former State Department official and earlier Walsh victim. "You don't [have] one or two counts. You have seven in the case of Clair George in the hopes that a divided jury will compromise on something." The first George trial ended in a mistrial, and the second trial appeared to be finishing with another hung jury. But, after 11 days of deliberation, with the holidays looming, the jury compromised on a conviction on two felony counts of lying to Congress. Legally the conviction means almost nothing. Is Mr. George the only official who has misled Congress in, say, the last two decades? It's known as politics. But he has spent six years of his life in an exhausting struggle and his legal fees are said to be in the $1-million range. (Contributions toward these fees can be made to The Legal Defense Fund, P. O. Box 309, Merrifield, Va. 22116.) Meanwhile, the one-count indictment against former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger that Walsh rushed to bring before the election—with a devastating effect on George Bush's campaign—has been tossed out by a federal judge. But Weinberger still faces four felony counts and a drawn-out public ordeal. What President Bush is said to value most is loyalty and service to country. Now is the time to act on those values—pardon Clair George and Caspar Weinberger.

■ The lameduck days of the Bush Administration are witnessing several lamentable capitulations to collectivism: four thousand pages of new regulations on food labeling, for one. Even more extraordinary is the Administration's settlement with environmental groups on the Endangered Species Act, providing for a greatly accelerated schedule for listing plant and animal species and for preserving whole ecosystems of habitats. The Act is probably unconstitutional in that it allows the government to block development on private land—a taking of property without compensation in breach of the Fifth Amendment. It is certainly a gross infringement of property rights, for it forces the owner to sacrifice any use of his private property that federal agents believe could impair an endangered species or its habitat. And there is simply no limit except the slowness of the federal bureaucracy to the amount of species protection that conservationists can demand. This will have the perverse effect of encouraging landowners to engage in pre-emptive attack—scorched-earth clearance operations before the feds can survey the land to document those property-threatening "endangered" flora and fauna. The Act is environmental extremism of the worst kind in that it assigns to tiny animals, insects, and plants an infinite value, while it pays no regard to the cost imposed on the human owner, or the economic opportunities lost in frozen development. Could all this be a devilishly clever Republican effort to stifle the economic recovery and set the stage for a 1996 GOP comeback?

■ Speaking on behalf of "those who could not vote and have no choice," in recent remarks before the Children's Defense Fund, Hillary Clinton asked: "What on earth could be more important than making sure that every child has a chance to be born healthy?" Good for Mrs. Clinton. We've been asking the same thing ever since *Roe* v. *Wade*.

■ New York City prides itself on its tolerance of everything but intolerance. The laws levy extra penalties on "bias crimes," and Mayor David Dinkins has declared that whenever "words of hate and bigotry are an ingredient" in a crime, "every one of our city's residents is made to suffer." Yet ultraorthodox Hasidic Jews distrust Dinkins and the city, and with good reason: 16 months ago, a 29-year-old Hasid was murdered in Brooklyn by a black mob chanting, "Kill the Jew," and there has been a string of anti-Jewish incidents since. How could such things happen? Partly because the concept of "bias crimes" was skewed from the beginning: some biases—against blacks, gays, or any other group that voted for David Dinkins—were more heinous than others. Partly because the very attempt to make the importance of criminal assault depend upon its motive distracted attention from the malignity of crime itself, and from society's primary duty to curb it. The public manners of Mayor Dinkins make an interesting contrast with those of Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice, who plunged himself into hot water when he called America "a Christian nation." David Dinkins would never say such a thing. Yet where does a Hasid feel safer today—in Jackson, Miss., or Brooklyn?

■ Our courts are less than passionate about the welfare of children prior to birth, so there is no reason to expect much better from them after the child has emerged from the womb. That's the lesson to be drawn from cases in Connecticut and Michigan in which judges have ordered that two babies, abandoned by their birth mothers and subsequently adopted by loving parents, be returned to the mothers who abandoned them. In Connecticut, Gina Pellegrino unexectedly appeared four and half months after the birth of her daughter, armed with a lawyer and certain it was her "right" to pick up as a mother where she had left off. The law provides little protection for children born to changeable-minded adults like Miss Pellegrino. New Jersey, for instance, has established no deadline at all by which birth parents must make up their minds: Do you want the kid or not? Connecticut has a twenty-day

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deadline, which, however, judges seem free to overrule if they feel like it. Probably the only way to avoid situations like this is for state legislatures to follow the lead of Massachusetts, which has made the giving up of a child—whether by abandonment or otherwise—an irrevocable act.

■ Now that Bobby Fischer has been indicted for playing chess in Yugoslavia, we wonder: Are Marines allowed to play poker in Somalia?

Savage Wars of Peace

"IF SOMALIA, why not Bosnia?" asks the cover of *Time*. The synergy of these two conflicts promises to be interesting. Will the Somali intervention make America more willing to intervene elsewhere—or less willing? The jury is still out, undoubtedly waiting to see more of how the Somali enterprise unfolds. In the meantime, for our part, we urge strongly that Americans consider each case on its merits and apply hard-nosed judgment to each, lest we sign on to a policy of indiscriminate global interventionism guided only by sentiment, undisciplined by military reality or national interest. That would be a formula for disaster.

If Somalia and Bosnia have anything in common, it is that in each case we had better know what we're doing if we are getting more deeply involved.

This magazine in its last issue gave cautious support to the Somali operation. We did so on certain assumptions, which we hope are not turning out to be wrong. Delivering food while the gangs simply lie low for a while is a palliative, not a long-term solution to Somalia's agony. At some point we and our allies will leave—and if nothing more has been done, Somalia will revert to the law of the jungle. The United States military's unwillingness to suppress the gangs—even to confiscate arms caches it stumbles upon—may turn out to be a costly mistake that vitiates what has been achieved. If that is indeed our policy, then there is a lot to be said for getting the hell out.

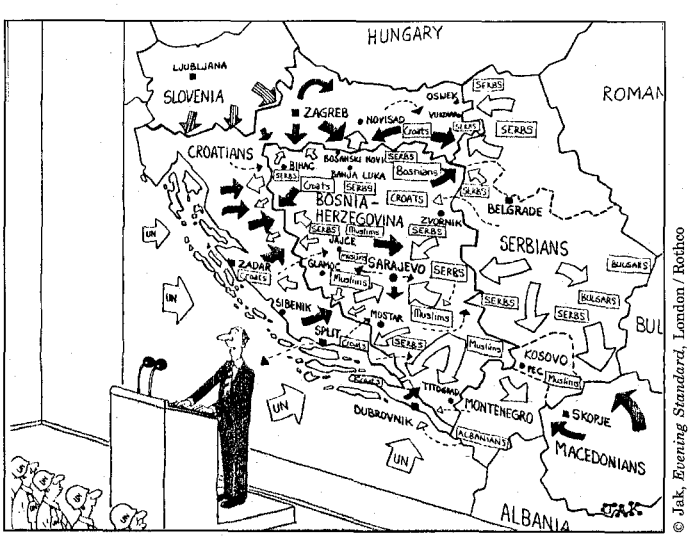
But we continue to believe there are worthwhile and attainable objectives in Somalia: suppressing the civil war and helping to organize a new political structure. If the first task requires the short, sharp shock of U.S. intervention, the second probably needs a long-term peacekeeping presence by other forces, possibly the Egyptians. Although the U.S. cannot be the world's policeman, it *can* be the world's police sergeant, providing the initial military force and the diplomatic leadership that persuades local powers to help stabilize major trouble spots. Instead, U.S. policy in recent crises from Iraq to Somalia has been a sort of indecisive decisiveness—

■ NOTE TO READERS: The next issue will not be printed until January 13, three weeks after publication of the one you are now reading.

bold interventions that lack a clear aim, shrink from the means necessary to their success, and so temporarily freeze the crisis rather than settling it.

Thus, in Somalia, instead of suppressing the warlords, U.S. strategy seems to be to try to mediate among them. It's like Eliot Ness trying to get the Mafia bosses to negotiate a market-sharing arrangement so the booze can be delivered without disruption. If we are lucky, the uneasy truce we have imposed so far will facilitate some political accomodation that can prevent a repetition of the breakdown. But without a more definitive solution to the military problem, it will be a matter of dumb luck if it succeeds. And if it fails, we will have to choose between withdrawing from chaos or imposing a military crackdown all the more difficult because delayed. It is a stern lesson in the reality that trying too hard to avoid risks is sometimes the riskiest course of all.

As for Yugoslavia, its grim complexities will be the same after Somalia as before. Events have already vindicated those, like NATIONAL REVIEW, who warned that Serbian aggression against Croatia would only spread if not stopped. First Croatia, then Slovenia, then Bosnia. Now there is a buildup of Serbian troops in Kosovo. There is a consensus, which we share, that a Serbian move in either Kosovo or Macedonia would pose a real danger of a wider international conflict—only a potential danger till now. Pressures from the Islamic world—Turkey, Iran, the Arab countries—might be uncontainable; NATO allies Greece and Turkey would have at it again; Russian nationalism would be pulled to the side of its Slavic Serbia. Suddenly it's August 1914. The West's margin for ignoring the strategic dangers is



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"Any questions?"

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shrinking—apart from the clear case for halting Serbian atrocities and defending international norms of conduct.

The U.S. military, who were persuaded that Somalia was doable, remain convinced that Yugoslavia is the mother of all quagmires. They are right that to pit U.S. ground troops against Serbian guerrillas in the mountains around Sarajevo would be a mistake. But our military have shied away from serious exploration of more decisive options. As a first step—long overdue—we should lift the absurd arms embargo that denies Bosnians and other victims of aggression the means to defend themselves. Mr. Clinton, we were happy to see, endorsed this idea some time ago. Unfortunately, the UN Commander currently in charge of relief efforts on the ground is opposed to this, saying it would show the UN taking sides and expose his forces to Serbian retaliation. But the tail cannot wag the dog here. The humanitarian problem is in the first place the product of the Serbian military dominance that our present policy perpetuates.

Having armed the Bosnians, we should further tilt the military balance in their favor by bombing military targets and supply lines to Serbian irregulars. If that were to prove inadequate, we could ultimately institute a massive air campaign to cripple Serbia's military and industrial capability at home, and perhaps to bring down its political leadership. It is very unlikely that Serbia could withstand the kind of devastating blow that was inflicted on Iraq. This would not end the conflict forever—in fact, we will need to think hard about a postwar political settlement guaranteed and policed by the major European powers. But it would change the present equation.

Thus, Bosnia and Somalia do come back together again: In neither case should there be any illusions that the humanitarian problem exists in a vacuum or can be solved without more decisive action against the root political (and military) problem. With Ronald Reagan now joining Margaret Thatcher in calling for more decisive military action by the world community, the moment of truth is drawing near. And the truth in question, as Macaulay points out, is that moderation in war is imbecility.

Liberals Revisit Taxes

A SUBTLE CHANGE has crept into the national economic dialogue. A case in point is a recent *New York Times* article [see also "On the Right," p. 62] describing the twists and turns of federal tax policy during the Reagan–Bush years. Washington correspondent Richard Rosenbaum's analysis contained a nugget you wouldn't have found in the great paper before November 4: "One popular misconception is that the Republican tax cuts caused a crippling federal budget deficit, now approaching $300 billion a year. The fact is, the large deficit resulted because the government vastly increased what it spent each year, while tax revenues changed little."

Actually, Mr. Rosenbaum stopped somewhat short of the truth. Tax revenues didn't change "little." They rose by more than $550 billion between 1980 to 1992, growing 45 per cent (in constant dollars) over that period. But Mr. Rosenbaum's sin of omission is trivial when you consider that for years the *Times* called for higher taxes—preferably on the wealthy—to remedy the effects of Reaganomics supposed revenue loss.

Of course, the alleged unfairness of the tax burden resonates far more loudly with the electorate. The pre-election *Times* never missed a chance to portray Reagan–Bush tax policy as welfare for the rich paid for by the middle class. We read in Mr. Rosenbaum's article, however, that "The wealthy now pay a higher proportion of total taxes than they did in 1980."

Mr. Rosenbaum's article is billed as the first of a four-part series. How far will the revisionism go? We will be delighted to read that runaway social spending explains most of the deficit increase since 1980; or that tax cuts for the rich paid for themselves; or that economic mobility was at record levels during the 1980s; or that the years in which Congress tried to close the deficit with higher taxes were invariably the ones in which the deficit worsened.

We know that Mr. Clinton's people were close readers of the *Times* before the election. We hope those reading habits won't change.

Farewell To Internal Combustion?

ENVIRONMENTALISTS who are always full of gloom and doom are at the same time wild optimists about the capacity of government planning to transform the condition of the planet. One of their favorite ideas is to have government force car companies to produce more "earth-friendly" cars—to increase the average fuel economy of gasoline-powered automobiles from the present 28 miles per gallon to 40 mpg, and to produce a certain percentage of cars with electric propulsion by the end of the decade.

Our President-to-be took up this environmentalist theme with enthusiasm early in his campaign, saying such measures would simultaneously reduce pollution, create jobs, and save motorists money. Of course if such a universally happy outcome were

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likely, the dynamics of the marketplace would be making it happen already, and there would be no need for government plans and mandates. Fortunately, when his campaign reached Detroit, Mr. Clinton hedged his commitment to the "green" plans for the automotive industry.

Environmentalists always pitch their auto plans as if the challenge is to get recalcitrant manufacturers to do the right thing. But there are already models out there in the showrooms that get better than 40 mpg—Ford Fiesta, GM Geo Metro, as well as a Daihatsu and the Subaru Justy, for example. The problem is recalcitrant consumers. Only a small proportion—around 2 per cent—want to buy these cars, because they are inevitably cramped, lack power, and are more dangerous in crashes.

There is something of the same problem with environmentalist plans to force the industry to switch to electric cars. The industry has been trying to make and sell these for a hundred years—in fact, electric cars pre-date gasoline-powered cars. The basic problem is that gasoline in a tank is hard to beat as a simple and efficient way to store energy on board. Imagine a power source that costs a couple of thousand dollars to make, stores the equivalent of two gallons of gasoline, weighs half a ton, takes four or five hours to fill up, and wears out after a year's use. That is the battery system of an electric car.

Of course technology can be improved, but in this already heavily researched area the improvements are a matter of many small, difficult, and expensive steps. And contrary to environmentalist propaganda electric cars are not a risk-free technology. The latest *Popular Science* reports an electric-car test in Arizona which "came to a sudden and dramatic end when the zinc-bromide battery pack started billowing red-orange smoke." The driver staggered out of his test vehicle and collapsed, and 14 onlookers who inhaled the bromine fumes were also hospitalized.

Since the state government in California embraced the environmentalist plan for mandating electric cars by 1998, all the major car companies have been pouring money into their development. The real question again is whether consumers will buy the electric cars in anything near the quantity needed to pay for their production. GM estimates battery models will cost some $5,000 to $10,000 more than gas-tanked traditionals. Only a handful of well-heeled fanatics will pay that sort of premium. Even the normally green National Research Council of the Academy of Sciences reported that the early 40-mpg mandate could "place an untenable financial burden on the industry."

Mandates for radically increased gas mileage and for impractical electric cars are exactly the kind of government meddling that could finish off GM—which has been suffering multi-billion annual losses of late—or Chrysler.

Could that be what some of the environmentalists really want?

There It Goes Again

That sick sucking sound heard as Marines
Try to service Somalia's canteens
    Is the quagmire's call,
    Which should start to appall
Mr. Clinton right down to his jeans.

W. H. VON DREELE

The New Yanquis

AN EXTENSIVE study of the political and social attitudes of Americans of Cuban, Mexican, and Puerto Rican descent has just been conducted by a team of academic scholars, and the results have come as an unwelcome surprise to "Latino" ideologues. The three groups surveyed make up about four-fifths of all Latino Americans—and the vast majority of the respondents in each group believe themselves to be Cuban-, Mexican-, or Puerto Rican *Americans*, and fully desire and intend to become regular old Americans. That they should be loyal to some "Latino" group which neither represents their specific ethnicity, nor is truly assimilated, seems to be limited to professional advocates.

Majorities as large as 80 per cent within each group say that people who live in this country should learn to speak English, that the goal of bilingual education should be to teach English (or both languages) rather than to preserve Spanish or the cultures of the old country, and that they have no interest in generic "Hispanic" (as opposed to Cuban, etc.) groups; a large majority of U.S.-born Hispanics speak English better than Spanish. Majorities describe themselves as moderate-to-conservative, specificially Cubans. Most surprising of all (at least to correct opinion) is the strong consensus in each group that there is currently too much immigration to the U.S. and that there should be no special preferences for Latin American immigrants.

"The implication," said Angelo Falcón, a researcher on the study, "is that there is a growing gulf between the Latino leadership and the community. "The degree of assimilation illustrates that for many years, even as the leadership has identified itself ethnically, there has been no real Latino political movement that might have encouraged distinctively Latino views." Recent policy has assumed the exact opposite: that Hispanics are oppressed unless treated as an alien sub-group; most conspicuous,

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separatist education programs and unrestricted immigration for "family reunification."

Especially perverse is the Justice Department's policy, carried on for several years now, of forcing states to gerrymander election districts to bolster "Hispanic" civil rights. The classic case is the 1991 election in Los Angeles County, where moderately conservative Republican Sarah Flores was likely to win a seat (from a heterogeneous district) as the first Hispanic member when a federal judge stepped in and forced a gerrymander, resulting in the election of liberal Democrat Gloria Molina, who naturally enough is already furthering the ideological meddling which has created her constituency.

Such policies, instituted in the name of democratic fairness, are destructive of the American polity; we now know that they are contrary to the desires of a majority of their supposed beneficiaries. A good place for President Clinton (*à la* Nixon to China) to do what his Republican predecessors dared not try.

Lessons in Riot Control

"THE TIME to halt a riot is right at the start," Eugene Methvin explained (*NR*, June 10, 1991), "by pinching off the criminal spearhead with precise and overwhelming force." In the major riot in South-Central Los Angeles last spring, the Los Angeles Police Department failed to do just that. Last week, at the same intersection where the beating of Reginald Denny took place, another outbreak of rock- and bottle-throwing occurred. The police chief, Willie L. Williams, struck fast and hard, deploying his forces in serious numbers, and the rioters went home.

Mr. Methvin, author of *The Riot Makers: The Technology of Social Demolition* (1970), has studied the subject for three decades. As he wrote in *NR*, "Riots begin when some set of social forces temporarily overwhelms or paralyzes the police, who stand by, their highly visible inaction signaling to the small percentage of teenaged embryonic psychopaths and hardened young adults that a moral holiday is under way. This criminal minority spearheads the car-burning, window-smashing, and bloodletting, mobbing such hate targets as blacks, or white merchants, or lone cops [or Asian merchants]. Then the drawing effect brings out the large crowds of older men, and women and children, to share the Roman carnival of looting. Then the major killing begins."

The first task of government is to preserve the civic order. Everything else depends upon that: prosperity, education, personal safety. Without civic order, nothing is possible.

Former Chief Gates, astonishingly, did not anticipate that the verdict in the Rodney King case would provide the excuse for a riot, and made few preparations. The outcome of the second trial in February of the four police officers who beat King might provide another excuse, but the new LAPD chief seems to have thoroughly absorbed the necessary lessons, which have really nothing to do with "rage," "frustration," or the "12 years of neglect" of the Reagan–Bush years.

Soaking the Rich

When yachts went up, they shopped abroad,
And when the tax assessors cawed
Like hungry crows about to pounce,
They simply shuffled their accounts,
Deferring here and there until
The IRS, like Jack and Jill,
Had empty pails and swollen toes,
As Secretary Bentsen knows.

W. H. VON DREELE

Nicholas L. King, R I P

HE WAS a large, shambling man, well over six feet tall, slow moving and deliberate, with a soft voice you sometimes had to strain to hear, wavy hair, a reddish complexion, and penetrating brown eyes. He was not handsome, not by any stretch of the imagination. But those eyes saw things others failed to see. He was an observer of the wondrous—often cockeyed—ways in which the world we live in operates. Polemics never really interested him, but how and why men reacted to any given situation did.

He cut his teeth journalistically as a United Press correspondent in London and Paris in the Fifties. UP made up for its lack of resources, and its reluctance to pay a living wage, by hiring enthusiastic youngsters and flinging them at the biggest stories of the day, largely untrained and unprepared. It was a tough apprenticeship but immensely rewarding for those who survived.

Nick King was Number 2 man on the UP desk in Paris when I joined the staff in 1953. The big story was the Indochina War, and, although UP had no reporters on the spot, it was holding its own against its major rival, AP, largely because of our color pieces, with their vivid descriptions of the terrain over which the battles raged. These were written thousands of miles from the scene, lifted gleefully from a 1910 travel book on Indochina that Nick had picked up in a bookstall on the *quais*. (You can be sure that UP did not reimburse him for it.) These de-

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tails gave a feeling of verisimilitude to our stories that AP correspondents actually in Indochina, who were limited in the amount of copy they could file by the exorbitant French imperial cable rates, couldn't even try to emulate. Nick was at his joyous best in such situations.

Nick King spent some years on the *New York Herald Tribune* and, when it folded, returned to Paris as press attaché in the embassy during the Kennedy–Johnson years. Then—a fine example of his flexibility—he landed a job as George Bush's press aide at the United Nations. Here, his intelligent handling of an aggressive and often hostile press helped Mr. Bush respond to the Munich Olympic massacre and the admission of Red China to the United Nations.

From the early Seventies on, Nick contributed essays and reviews to *NR*. (His 1977 piece on the America's Cup is memorable.) He was, for a brief period between government jobs, editor of the *National Review Bulletin*, and for a number of years contributed numerous unsigned items, including the popular "Abroad" feature in the magazine.

In 1981, Ronald Reagan appointed him head of the USIA Foreign Press Center in New York. It was there, 11 years later—on the day the Marines landed in Somalia—that Nick King, 68, suffered a fatal heart attack.

I received Nick's Christmas card the day after his death. He was much excited because he and Joan were flying to Rome to spend Christmas week in an apartment an Italian correspondent had lent him. The apartment was 52 steps up. "You have to count the steps," Nick wrote, "for if you walk up 58 steps, you find yourself in another apartment on another floor. Sound good?"

At this point the Lord opted instead for Nick to take that last step of all on the road to eternal salvation. He left behind, as good men do, family and friends devastated by his departure but all of them, as am I, forever grateful for the privilege of having known Nicholas King. —PLB

NOTES & ASIDES

■ WILLIAM SHAWN, R I P

Mr. John O'Sullivan
National Review

Dear John:

You asked me to do an obit on William Shawn, and I replied that I could not write a formal piece about him because of the odd intimacy of my experiences with him. I speak of a man on whom I laid eyes twice in my life.

The day the newspapers carried the news of his death a letter from him arrived at the office. It was handwritten and had been mailed the day before he died. I quote it in full:

> Dear Mr. Buckley:
>
> Thank you for sending me copies of *WindFall* and *In Search of Anti-Semitism*. Since you are the author of both books, I am confident that I will not be disappointed. I have not yet read *Anti-Semitism*, but I've read enough of *WindFall* to see that I can read the rest with confidence. The Buckley style, thank goodness, is intact, and the humor is undiminished. I'll go on reading. Meanwhile, I send you warmest regards,
>
> William Shawn

Obviously, he was "Mr. Shawn" to me, as he was Mr. Shawn even to authors older than I, who had much closer experiences with him than I. But from the beginning he was in his own way so very courteous to me that I took extravagant pains never to suggest that I was urging on him a familiarity he might have found uncomfortable. With almost anyone else with whom I have fairly extensive personal dealings, as you know, I'd have got around pretty early on, never mind how I addressed him/her, to signing off as "Bill." Never with Mr. Shawn. Always, "Wm. F. Buckley Jr." I can't help believing that he knew what I was up to, and liked it.

I don't recall what it was that prompted me to send my manuscript, *Cruising Speed*, to him in 1970. The chances against *The New Yorker*'s running an intensely personal journal of a single week in the life of a youngish (I was 45) right-wing journalist were overwhelming. We all remember the usual things, the day Kennedy was killed, V-J Day; I remember the afternoon I reached Camden, South Carolina, to visit with my mother. Frances Bronson had left word to call her at the office. I did, of course, and she told me breathlessly that Mr. Shawn had *called her up* and told her that he very definitely wished to publish "Mr. Buckley's" book, which, he told her, was "beautifully written and witty" and that he would himself be editing the excerpts run by *The New Yorker*. No other professional experience in my lifetime has so buoyant a place in my memory.

He had assigned himself, I gather from reading about him and talking with a few *New Yorker* professionals, the job of personally editing one book manuscript every year, I think it was, and whether he selected me because, by lot, my manuscript came up at the time his turn had come to serve, or whether, for whatever reason, he selected mine as the book he wished to edit I don't know. But the experience was unique, a word he would frown upon unless it was used with great precision.

I use it with great precision. Others have written about it, but it is ever so hard to believe, even having lived through the experience, that the part of your book Mr. Shawn has elected to reproduce arrives one day in galley form. A single column, two

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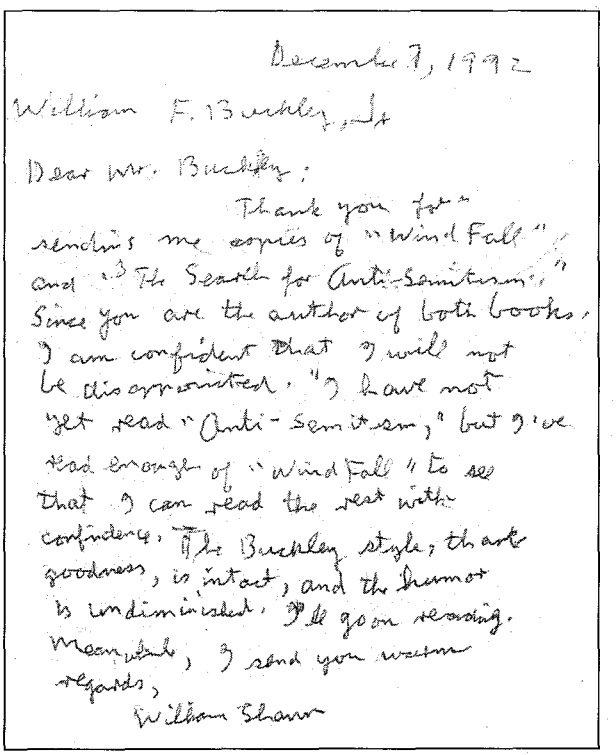
inches wide, running down the middle of a long sheet of paper, clipped to the next galley. The appearance is identical to cutting out a column from the *New York Times* and pasting it on a long sheet of paper eight inches wide. There was no apparent reason at all for the extraordinary extravagance of the procedure: Why did it not come to you typewritten and double-spaced, cheaper to execute (these were the days of Linotype, when any alteration meant replacing an entire line of metal type), and easier to edit? One did not ask.

In the roomy spaces to the right and to the left appeared Mr. Shawn's handwritten "queries." He wondered whether this was the correct spelling of a name, whether, on reflection, one wished to say exactly this, worded exactly so, about that phenomenon, or that statement, by that man or woman. He questioned the use of a comma there, of a paragraph marking somewhere else. The author confronted also the queries of the "fact checker." No "fact" was ever taken for granted, if it could be independently verified. I remember that in one passage in my book I made a reference to the speech given by Tom Clark, with whom I was debating before the annual conference of the Chamber of Commerce. I had written that Clark's opening speech was "a half-hour" long. On the side, a tiny note from the fact-checker. "Listened to tape. He spoke for 22 minutes."



December 7, 1992

William F. Buckley, Jr.

Dear Mr. Buckley:

Thank you for sending me copies of "Wind Fall" and "The Search for Anti-Semitism." Since you are the author of both books, I am confident that I will not be disappointed. I have not yet read "Anti-Semitism," but I've read enough of "Wind Fall" to see that I can read the rest with confidence. The Buckley style, thank goodness, is intact, and the humor is undiminished. I'll go on reading. Meanwhile, I send you warm regards,

William Shawn

But this was the first of three drafts of the 30,000 words *The New Yorker* published in two installments. The second and the third drafts were completely reset at the printer, assimilating edited alterations; and they arrived with fresh queries, and suggestions. But the great moment came when Frances told me that Mr. Shawn had called her to ask if I would lunch with him at the Plaza Oak Room. He liked to talk to your secretary, much preferred doing this to talking to you; or in any event, that was so in my own case. For every conversation I had with him over the telephone, Frances had a half-dozen. I acknowledge that this probably says something about Mr. Shawn, but conceivably says something about the relative advantages of talking to Frances Bronson instead of to me.

I went to the Plaza, of course, and we sat behind a small screen. I don't remember what he ate, but do remember that the waiter knew what to bring him, and I think I read somewhere that he pretty much always ate the same thing. He was genial only in the sense that his courtesy was absolute. There was only the barest amount of small talk. He wished to talk about the book he was editing, and to ask me a question or two concerning this point or the other. In particular I remember his telling me, in the most mild-mannered tones, that on reading the proofs I had returned—in most cases I had stuck by the punctuation I had originally used, rejecting the proffered alternatives—he had concluded that I was given to rather . . . eccentric uses of the comma. He said this by way of imparting information. It was not a reproach, or, rather, not exactly a reproach: but I could feel the tug of his great prestige, and so told him I would go back and look again at my footloose commas. The lunch ended fairly quickly and most agreeably, and a week or two later he called me, as he did four or five times before the manuscript finally appeared in print, to tell me, "Mr. Buckley, I really do not think that you know the correct use of the comma." I can't remember what it was that I replied, but do recall that I resolved not to fight *à outrance* over the remaining commas in the essay.

It is not everywhere known that, under Mr. Shawn, the author was given the final say as to what parts of his book would run, subject to the limitations of the space designated for that book. On some points Mr. Shawn would not give way—animadversions, for instance, which he thought for whatever reason unfair or unjustified. "Mr. Buckley, I do wish you would eliminate that paragraph about Mr. [Jones]. You see, we do not run a letters page, and it isn't quite fair to leave him without an opportunity to defend himself. . . ." I don't know how other authors handled him, but in almost every case, I yielded. His style was to cause the author to acquiesce in the change, rather than to dictate the change. With me this worked, though I remember a few cases in which, through an intermediary editor, I pleaded my case, and in all but one of these, Mr. Shawn yielded.

Two years later, I sent him the first of my sailing books, *Airborne*, once again thinking the possibility remote that he would himself read it, let alone publish it. But he did, passing along, through Frances, some nice words about my prose. A year or two later

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I wrote him to say that I had completed a book about the United Nations, but doubted he would wish to read it because United Nations life was intolerably boring. He replied instantly by mail asking to see it and one week later wrote to say he wished to publish my United Nations book. I made the dreadful mistake of declining, finally, to release it to *The New Yorker* because of its ruling that no book published in the magazine could appear in the trade press until six months had gone by. My publisher didn't want to let six months go by, and so I hurried out with it, only to discover that not more than 16 people in the entire world are willing to read any book about the United Nations. I was pleased to hear from Mr. Shawn that I had written the only book about the United Nations that was both "literate and readable." I appreciated the compliment even though it was not hard to make, inasmuch as at the time there were no books about the United Nations, literate or illiterate, except an odd Brazilian memoir and a kind of coffee-table book by Conor Cruise O'Brien, designed to promote some artist.

A year or two later I wrote him to say that I had cruised again across the Atlantic, and did not suppose that he would wish to consider yet another book on yet another trans-Atlantic sail. Oh but he would; and he proceeded to publish *Atlantic High*. Five years later I told him that only out of courtesy was I mentioning to him my manuscript, *Racing Through Paradise*, as it was inconceivable that *The New Yorker* would wish a third book by me with an ocean cruise as background. Inside of one week he advised me he wished to publish it. The last book of mine that he published was *Overdrive*, a sequel of sorts to *Cruising Speed*, in that it too was the journal of one week in my life. It was greeted as a most provocative, outrageous book, and was bitterly criticized by many reviewers. I winced at one reviewer, who wrote that perhaps Mr. Shawn's imminent departure from *The New Yorker* had something to do with the manifest deterioration of his literary judgment, as witness his publication of *Overdrive*. When a few months later I wrote the introduction to the soft-cover edition of the book, a long (glorious!) essay examining the criticisms of the book, I sent him a copy. He called me to say, in gentle accents but without running any risk of my misunderstanding him on the subject, that the critics of my book had had other things in mind than the quality of the book, which he was pleased to have sponsored.

I mentioned that he liked to speak to Frances. When a *New Yorker* check arrived for *Overdrive*, she called me in San Francisco to report jubilantly that the check was for $40,000. But later in the afternoon she called and said with some dismay that Mr. Shawn had telephoned her. "What he said was, 'Oh, Miss Bronson, our bookkeepers have made a most embarrassing mistake on the check for Mr. Buckley, and I would be grateful if you would simply mail it back to us, and we will mail the correct check tomorrow.' " That could only mean, we both reasoned, that I had been overpaid. The following day a check arrived for $55,000. Mr. Shawn had his own way of twinkling at the world he treated so formally.

An interesting postscript. When he had retired from *The New Yorker*, as you know, there were great protests from his adamantly loyal staff. About nine months later I said to myself: Should I write and invite him to lunch with me? I'd never have done any such thing while he was still the editor of his magazine, with powers of life and death over you. Such an overture might have been thought a venture in self-ingratiation. So I put it very carefully in my little note to him, saying merely that it would give me great pleasure to lunch with him but I recognized that he didn't go out very much and that when he did he almost certainly had on his mind a profes-sio-nal objective. He called Frances a day or so later and said he would be most pleased to lunch, and a week or so later we met at the Carlyle, and talked together animatedly. He had read that week's issue of NATIONAL REVIEW. I can't believe that he (a hardy political liberal) read *NR* as a matter of habit, but could easily persuade myself that he had made it a point to read the current issue in order to prepare for our lunch. (He read, by the way, with the speed of light. Everything that appeared in *The New Yorker* he had himself read, some of it two and, as with my books, three or even four times.) The hour went quickly and pleasantly and there was a total absence of ambient pressure, I thought.

The difficult decision came one year later. What went through my mind was this, that if I did not invite him one more time to lunch, he might think that the first invitation was done out of a sense of duty to a retired editor who had acted generously to me, and that now that he was so far away from the scene, I had no further interest in him. I decided to invite him again to lunch. He replied to Frances that he would like very much to have lunch, and suggested that perhaps some time in the fall would be good. That was in 1991. In the fall, he called Frances, to say that he still looked forward to our lunch but would rather not set a date for it right away, would this be agreeable? I wrote back that of course that would be agreeable; any time would do. I did not hear again from him until the letter I received the day he died.

He was a mythogenic character, a man totally taken by his muse and by his determination to hold to the standards he respected. I hope someone, perhaps one of his talented sons, will one day produce if not exactly a "life" of William Shawn, a book about his priorities, his literary manners, his immense effect on our culture, and his enormous impact on his devoted admirers. —Bill

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ON THE SCENE

Winning in New York

RICHARD VIGILANTE

Fred Carlson

NEW YORK

LAST year New York City's School Chancellor Joseph Fernandez promulgated a multicultural curriculum called The Children of the Rainbow, aimed in part at teaching grade-school children "positive aspects," as the curriculum put it, of homosexual family life. The recommended reading includes books like *Daddy's Roommate* (in which a young boy is surprised, then delighted, that his divorced father is so happy with his new, male friend) and *Heather Has Two Mommies* (in which a girl, the product of artificial insemination, finds that two mommies are at least as good as a mommy and a daddy). The curriculum met resistance but seemed destined to prevail through sheer parental fatalism until Community School District 24, in the heart of white ethnic Queens, flatly refused to accept it.

Mr. Vigilante is the editorial director of The Center for Social Thought in New York and is completing a book on the Daily News *strike and the future of American labor.*

Even then, the political outcome seemed certain. New York's gay-activist lobby is not only the most aggressive and self-indulgent interest group in the city, it is one of the most powerful. It effectively controls the city's Human Rights Commission, which forced the (explicitly Catholic) Ancient Order of Hibernians to include homosexual groups carrying "message" banners in the St. Patrick's Day parade, though the parade had banned all such banners for years. The gay lobby wields great influence in the city's education bureaucracy, and was specifically conceded considerable influence in the preparation of the Rainbow curriculum.

The New York press, which is less liberal than one might expect on most local issues, is over the top on this one. Even the *New York Post*, whose editorial page is conservative, has adopted the *Times*'s strategy on the news pages: quote as little as possible from the curriculum or the recommended books and repeat over and over again that the folks out in Queens are opposing the curriculum because it "teaches tolerance." Perhaps the most stunning display of the apparent balance of political power was that Andrew Stein, a moderate Democrat, endorsed the imposition of the curriculum on unwilling districts, even though his hopes to unseat Mayor Dinkins in 1993 depend absolutely on votes from ethnic Queens and Brooklyn.

Imagine the surpise, then, as the opponents of the curriculum started winning. When Chancellor Fernandez took the extraordinary step of suspending the entire board of District 24 and appointing his own surrogates to run the district—something never before done except in serious cases of corruption—District 24's board appealed to the seven-member Central Board (which had hired Fernandez) to stay the suspension pending a full investigation. The betting was that the Central Board would, at best, temporize: it would wait for the investigation and hope for a compromise. In the event, the Board, led by Irene Impellezari, a local conservative heroine, went beyond District 24's request for a stay and voted 6 to 0 (with one abstention) to overturn the suspension immediately.

Now, the leak only a few days before of lengthy excerpts from Fernandez's forthcoming memoir—in which he says extremely unflattering things about the Central Board and calls Board member Ninfa Segarra a "political prostitute"—probably did not help his case. But there is a lot more going on here. Two weeks before, the Board had voted 4 to 3, over the furious opposition of Fernandez and gay lobbyists, to require city school teachers to stress abstinence over "safe sex" in classes on AIDS prevention. The swing vote came from Miss Segarra, who was appointed to a four-year term on the Board on the assumption that she would be predictably liberal.

As Miss Segarra, the only Board member with children in the public schools, told *New York Post* columnist Ray Kerrison, she changed her mind when she actually read the AIDS curriculum and saw what the schools intended to teach her kids. "There was information in there that made me squirm. . . . It made me physically ill. . . . [I could not accept] the idea that this would be taught to my daughter and son by some stranger in the classroom." The curriculum's comment on masturbation: "Do it, it's fun."

Even before the Central Board slapped Fernandez, the revolt was spreading beyond District 24. District 29, in a virtually all-black Brooklyn neighborhood, also rejected the curriculum. After the slap, one began to hear news of angry open meetings throughout the city, where parents have made their unhappiness clear to local school boards.

What's going on, in part, is that the sexual liberals have been out mugging folks, and even here in New York a mugging or two tends to shift one's perspective. As Barnard sociologist Jonathan Rieder has remarked about another social issue, "The parent so liberal that he does not mind his child sharing a park bench with the home-

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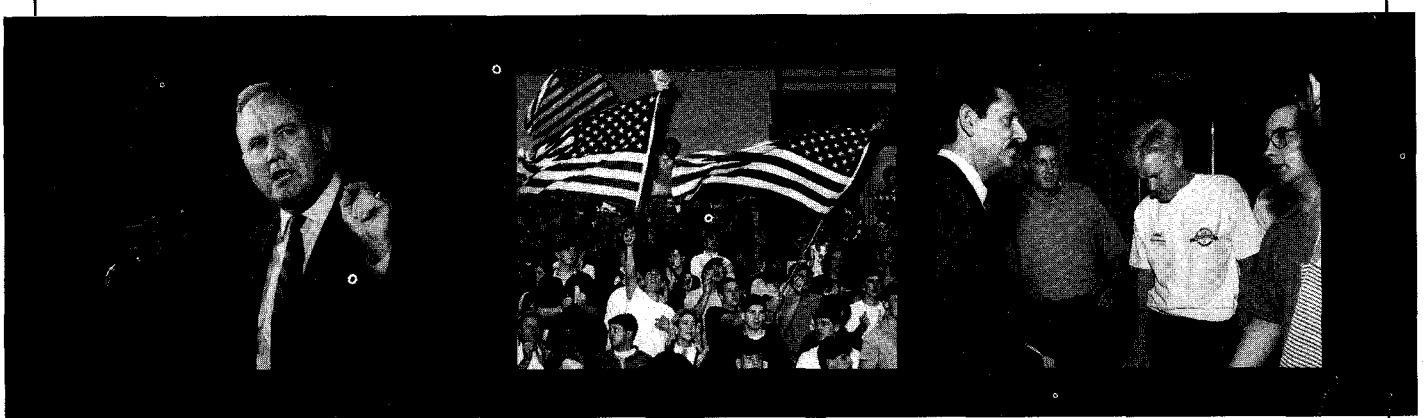

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DAN QUAYLE

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less does not exist." The same could safely be said of childhood instruction in techniques of anal stimulation.

Perhaps more importantly, the gay lobbyists and their allies have been caught on the wrong side of the pluralism question. Despite the virtual press embargo on the actual contents of these curricula, parents understand very clearly the difference between teaching children not to be mean to people who are different, and using tolerance as cover for sexual propaganda. In a city where nearly everything is tolerated, Fernandez et al. will not tolerate the values of traditional communities. Protesting parents are making it clear that they are perfectly willing to live and let live, and say it is Fernandez and company who are "imposing their values."

The whole matter could be resolved through a pluralist institution, school choice, under which schools would be freed to choose their own curricula and parents to choose their children's schools. This was the exact reason that the Religious Right gave birth to the school-choice movement: to reassert parental power against the state. Fernandez has smiled upon school choice in general, but on sexual matters he and his allies are unrelenting—and the sense that they are pushing people around has tipped the balance against them.

The political moral: pluralism is the great natural ally of social conservatism. Though the majority of Americans have no real desire to control the personal lives of others, they do want control over their *own* lives. At a time when social conservatives are increasingly being accused of intolerance, it is important to remember that nearly everything they want can be obtained through pluralism, federalism, and reduction in the size of government. Those three can give us a nation of families that control the education of their own children (pluralism), live in neighborhoods where criminals and enemies of order are not protected by the federal courts or the welfare bureaucracy (federalism), and, having been relieved from government avarice, can afford not only the necessities of life but the leisure to raise their families. That is a conservative agenda that wins simply because it is indistinguishable from most people's notion of the American way. □

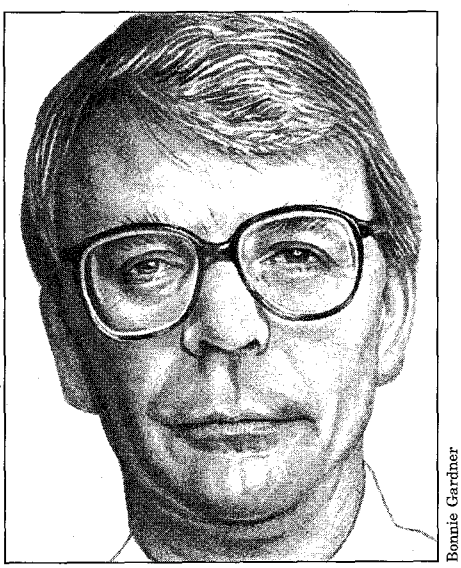
Other People's Money

NOEL MALCOLM

EDINBURGH

"I HAVE SEEN the future, and it works," said Lincoln Steffens after a visit to Moscow in 1919. Visitors to Edinburgh in December 1992 who watched the 12 EC heads of government emerging from the haggling at their twice-yearly summit can say something similar, but more cautious: "We have seen the future, and how it works."

That the European Community worked at all at Edinburgh was a cause of celebration in the British Foreign Office, whose job it was to keep the show on the road. Some were predicting total deadlock or final collapse; and the Foreign Office itself was studiously downbeat in its briefings during the final week before the summit. Nothing has gone smoothly in the EC since the Danish voters rejected the Maastricht Treaty in June. In September the treaty was very nearly thrown out by the French in their own referendum; meanwhile the EC currency system, the Exchange Rate Mechanism, underwent a partial collapse, forcing the Italians to devalue and the British to quit (wasting $3.2 billion of their currency reserves in the process).



Bonnie Gardner

At last Europe has developed a common language: the language of recrimination. The British blamed the Germans for failing to support the pound; the British and the Germans blamed the French for sabotaging the GATT negotiations; and everyone blamed the British for everything that went wrong in the Community, because Britain was holding the rotating presidency at the time. One French government minister, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, declared that it was the most "calamitous" presidency he had known in his whole time in government—an accusation rendered slightly less shocking by the fact that he had been in government for just over one year.

That Prime Minister Major was able to emerge after all from the Edinburgh summit with a whole range of agreements and declarations is a sign that the sclerotic EC has not yet reached the stage of total paralysis. However, this does not mean, as the government spokesmen try to insist, that Europe is now restored to full vigor. The fact that the EC still works at all has given great comfort to Mr. Major and his fellow heads of government. But the way in which it works should cause nothing but concern and alarm to the 330 million people whom they claim to represent.

The first EC characteristic which the summit displayed, and the main ingredient of its success, was indecision. Any list of the most important issues confronting the EC at the end of 1992 would have to begin with the future of GATT, which the French government has threatened to destroy. This issue hangs like the sword of Damocles not only over the Community, but also over the future prosperity of the world. And what did the Edinburgh summit do about it? Nothing. It left GATT off the agenda.

Other crucially important issues include the future of the Exchange Rate Mechanism, which continues to crack up under the strain of high German interest rates, and the future of the former territory of Yugoslavia, which threatens to turn into an international war in Europe's backyard. On the ERM, the summit had no discussion and made no decision; on Yugoslavia, it had a discussion and decided to do nothing. The final communiqué's sec-

Mr. Malcolm is foreign editor of The Spectator *(London).*

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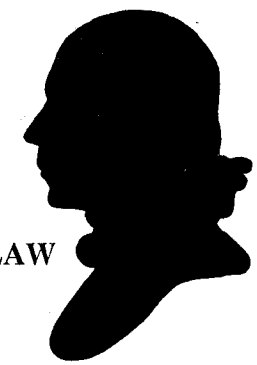
THE FEDERALIST SOCIETY



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tion on Yugoslavia raises bathos into an art form: it concludes that, "given the gravity of this tragic situation, the EC has no choice but to promote and participate in further initiatives which the international community may be obliged to undertake." So there. Meanwhile, the most likely place for this "tragic situation" to become more tragic is in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, which may become the flashpoint for a full-scale Balkan war. The main cause of instability there is the Greek-inspired decision of the EC at its last summit in Lisbon to deny recognition to Macedonia so long as it calls itself "Macedonia." Here at least, some change was thought possible, given that most of the other EC countries are fed up with Greece's childish obsession with place-names. Once again, however, the summit decided not to decide; "The European Council examined its policy on recognition of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the context of the Lisbon declaration. . . . It invites Foreign Ministers to remain seized of this question." While they remain, in that quaint phrase, "seized" of the question, Macedonia may also be seized—first by civil war, and then by Serbia.

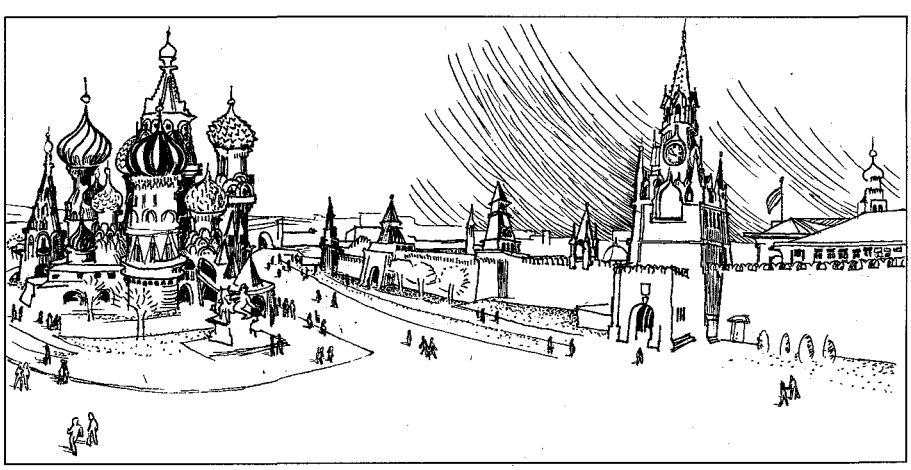
The second EC characteristic that this summit displayed was log-rolling. A certain amount of fixing and favor-exchanging is likely at any international negotiation; but in the EC it is the normal and essential way of doing things. There is no common agenda and very little common interest; the range of countries—large and small, northern and Mediterranean, Protestant and Catholic, industrialized and agricultural, NATO and non-aligned, conservative, social-democrat, and socialist—is simply too great. Each country has its own objectives, and the only way it can get some of them voted through is by making deals in which it agrees to vote for other countries' proposals, even though it thinks them damaging and wrong. For Europe overall, this is a recipe for guaranteed incoherence.

The Edinburgh summit resembled nothing so much as a world log-rolling championship. The French were busy exchanging favors in preparation for the eventual showdown on GATT: it was their support for Greece on the Macedonian question which helped to ensure that nothing was done on that issue. The Danes had already curried favor with the French by sympathizing with their criticisms of the GATT proposals; in return, the French were more helpful in securing an agreement to the special "opt-outs" which Denmark demanded from the Maastricht treaty. Meanwhile Spain was demanding more money from the EC budget; it was supported unexpectedly by Germany (the biggest contributor to the budget), in return for Spanish agreement to press for Germany's policies of European monetary and political unification.

Which leads naturally enough to the third characteristic of the EC: its tendency to respond to any problems by spending more money. All politicians have this tendency, of course; everyone likes spending other people's money. But when a government agrees to higher EC expenditure, it is mainly spending other governments' other people's money. The temptation is irresistible. This summit agreed to increase EC spending by 30 per cent (on top of inflation) over the next seven years. Agricultural subsidies will rise from $43 billion next year to $47 billion in 1999; but the main increase will be in transfer payments to the poorer countries. And this in turn makes those countries agree to the extension of EC control over more and more aspects of people's lives, because more EC action means more EC spending. The direction in which Europe will move is clear. The logic may not be irresistible; but the money is. As Mr. Major proudly announced at the end of the summit, "Europe is back on course." □

Two Steps Back

MASSIMO CALABRESI



Stephen Moros

Moscow

SEVERAL hours before Russia's VII Congress of People's Deputies was due to close on December 14, Andrei Kozyrev, Russia's foreign minister, released the following statement to the council of foreign ministers of the CSCE in Stockholm: "We demand that [the sanctions against Yugoslavia] be ceased, and if they are not, we retain the right to take unilateral actions in defense of our interests, since the sanctions are economically detrimental to us. In its struggle, the government of Serbia may count on the support of great Russia."

Mr. Calabresi is an American writer based in Moscow.

Eyes widened, jaws fell, and Lawrence Eagleburger lit another cigarette. Minutes later Kozyrev took the podium to explain that "The text previously quoted by me is a rather accurate compilation of demands of the something less than radical opposition in Russia." He said he had issued it as a "dramatic exercise" to illustrate what the world would be dealing with if Boris Yeltsin were to lose power.

The foreign ministers, although not amused, took Kozyrev's point. A few hours afterward, they may well have wondered whether they had gotten the message only too late. In Moscow, that "something less than radical" opposition, with the assistance of other anti-reform elements, had scored a huge victory by forcing President Boris

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Are You Too Smart to Dismiss Old Screwtape?

Mark Twain said he didn't believe in Hell but was afraid he'd go there. Isn't that a problem with atheism and all those godless "isms" — Freudianism, hedonism, Marxism, etc. — that have fascinated apparently intelligent people? You just can't be sure there isn't a God, a Judgment, a Devil, and a Hell.

But isn't all that Heaven-and-Hell stuff a crutch for wimps and neurotics, an insult to one's intelligence?

Actually, there's a revival of interest in religion going on among the intelligentsia. And why not? Intellectuals have bought into every panacea and quack remedy to come down the pike, and are running out of substitutes for the Real Thing. Ostensibly bright people have pooh-poohed Hell, liberated themselves from morality, turned themselves into pooh-bahs, and created a Hell on earth for everyone else. Perhaps it's true that the Devil's cleverest wile is to convince us he doesn't exist.

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Yeltsin to replace the reformist prime minister, Yegor Gaidar, with Viktor Chernomyrdin, a former vice minister for oil and gas.

The Congress had already rejected Gaidar's nomination the week before, after which Yeltsin had horrified them by saying he intended to hold a referendum asking the Russian people to whom they would entrust the country's reforms.

In a panic, the deputies, led by the speaker, Ruslan Khasbulatov, responded by calling in the security ministers to testify whether or not they supported the constitution, apparently in the conviction that such a referendum was unconstitutional, which it was not.

They then passed various unconstitutional measures themselves, including a moratorium on referendums. With a full-blown crisis in the making, the president of the Constitutional Court, Valery Zorkin, demanded that the two sides negotiate. Yeltsin, both affirming and strengthening the authority of the judiciary as independent of the executive and legislative branches, agreed to meet with Khasbulatov.

A convoluted, but comparatively fair, nominating process for prime minister was agreed to, and in a "soft rating" vote by the Congress, Gaidar finished a distant third behind Yuri Skokov, the hard-line head of Yeltsin's Security Council, and Chernomyrdin.

Yeltsin had the option of re-nominating Gaidar and, if he was again rejected, of keeping him as acting prime minister for another three months. However, by allowing the Congress to influence the nominating process on this one occasion, Yeltsin had gotten them to agree to a nationwide referendum in the spring on a new constitution, to be written by Yeltsin and the Constitutional Court, which he hopes will abolish the Congress once and for all. If he appeared to break with the spirit of the Court-brokered agreement by ignoring the Congress's vote, he would risk their blocking this new referendum. Apparently unwilling to do so, Yeltsin abandoned Gaidar and nominated Chernomyrdin, who was approved by an overwhelming majority.

Initially, Gaidar's removal looks to be an unmitigated disaster. Chernomyrdin is an old-line Communist who spent the majority of his life as an apparatchik in the energy industry before rising to the Party's central committee under Brezhnev. He came to the post of minister for oil and gas in the Gaidar administration only because President Yeltsin had been forced by the anti-reform industrial lobby to give them representatives in power. Likewise, his ascension to prime minister came about thanks to the support of six essentially Communist factions in the Congress. In a direct comparison with the young, free-market fundamentalist, Gaidar, Chernomyrdin looks positively paleolithic.

The most immediate concern is Chernomyrdin's influence on economic policy. He has stated publicly his disapproval of the pace of reform under Gaidar, and his first day on the job he gave a press conference that was riddled with dim contradictions. At one moment he asserted that he was for reform and the market, at another he declared that certain prices would "never be freed." When asked by an American journalist whether he would heavily subsidize failing enterprises, thereby risking hyperinflation, or would allow them to go bankrupt, he asked in return, "Can you suggest a third way? No? I am afraid that I will not be able to tell you anything now either. We will think about it."

Perhaps because of this weak showing, as well as the personal appeals by the outgoing prime minister, several of Gaidar's team of young economists have agreed to stay on in the new cabinet. Most notable is Anatoly Chubais, the minister for privatization, who rivals Gaidar in intelligence and free-market fervor. Chubais's program of privatization enjoys broad popular support and is critical for the micro-economic evolution of the country. By remaining at his post he provides some hope of continued reform.

For the most part, however, the change can only be seen as bad news for reform in Russia. Chernomyrdin will be susceptible to anti-reform lobbying from the Supreme Soviet, the smaller, day-to-day version of the Congress, and some conflicts between him and the remaining reformers are already in the making.

No matter what disputes result over the economy, however, the change is not likely soon to produce any protocols like Kozyrev's rhetorical one. Boris Yeltsin remains the dominant source of power in Russian politics, and as long as he does, one can expect that Russia will continue to cooperate with what he almost reverentially calls the community of "civilized nations." Nevertheless, the events at the VII Congress demonstrate that Yeltsin's ability to keep his Communist and nationalist opponents at bay is subsiding, and makes Kozyrev's insistence that the rest of the world weigh the effects of their actions on Russia all the more valid. □

Public Lives

ANTHONY LEJEUNE

LONDON

"THERE IS," Prime Minister John Major told the House of Commons, "no reason why the Princess of Wales should not be crowned Queen in due course." A small gasp of astonishment ran through the House, and a howl of incredulity rose from the whole country. In literal terms what Mr. Major said is, of course, true; if, when the time came, Charles and Diana were still only separated, not divorced, she would legally be Queen. But from a practical and human point of view, and if the act of coronation has any sacramental validity, the idea is plainly absurd. Would the royal couple arrive at Westminster Abbey in different carriages, sit coldly side by side while the archbishop intoned, and then depart in opposite directions?

Unthinkable, surely. So why was it adumbrated, needlessly, in the prime minister's brief statement, which must have been approved by Buckingham Palace and by the archbishop of Canterbury? The object may have been to cushion the announcement, suggesting that the formal separation of the Prince and Princess was a sad matter more of private than of public importance. That the government and the

Mr. Lejeune is NR*'s longtime London correspondent.*

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royal advisors should believe such a tactic would work shows how out of touch with public opinion they are.

Subsequent opinion polls have shown overwhelmingly that most people do not think Diana should, or could, now become Queen; around 50 per cent of those asked might favor skipping a generation, so that Prince William, Charles's elder son, and not Charles himself, became the next monarch.

However distasteful the media coverage may seem to social and cultural snobs, the whole affair is of enormous public interest. The London *Daily Mail* offered "a unique 24-page analysis of a marriage that changed the monarchy," and virtually every other British newspaper also devoted several pages to it. They were right. "End of the Fairytale" wept the headlines. Simply as a human drama, the unhappy climax of a love story in which the British people, indeed the whole world, has been vicariously involved is fascinating.

Nobody can truly know what goes on in anybody else's marriage, let alone a marriage as odd as this one: but we all feel, perhaps erroneously, that we know enough about Charles and Diana to take a view—which generally means taking sides. From now on, there will be effectively two distinct courts, a Prince's Party and a Princess's Party. The divisions are already sharp, manifested by newspaper columnists and commentators, some of whom say that the royal family—the royal "firm," as the Duke of Edinburgh describes it—has, like "the base Indian, who threw a pearl away, richer than all his tribe," wantonly rejected its greatest asset, the bright star who alone could have guaranteed its popularity in the foreseeable future.

Others—more of them women than men—have been reinterpreting the Princess as a manipulative and selfish hysteric, unwilling to accept the responsibilities of her position and vindictively determined to blacken the reputation of a well-meaning Prince who cannot, or will not, hit back.

The Prince may not openly have responded in Diana's own coin, but the Prince's Party has not been loath to wage its own campaign against her. Unsuccessfully, because Diana's personal magic proved too strong.

The two parties, the two courts, consist of very different types of people, the Princess's urban and fun-loving in a modern way, the Prince's oriented to country sports and formal duties. Was the marriage therefore doomed from the beginning? Who knows? I'm inclined to believe that more warmth, more imagination, more gentleness, could have molded the very young Diana in ways which would have made everybody happy: but neither the Prince nor the royal firm was capable of displaying such human qualities. Instead of which, from a pit of misery, she molded herself and has discovered an alarming, intoxicating power.

This is not a picture which the conventional establishment has found easy to accept. So establishment opinion, including some priggish newspapers and a lot of ordinary loyal people, needed a scapegoat and settled on the tabloid press. Cruel intrusion into the royal couple's private life, they claim, was a principal cause of the breakup. What loss would it have been to any legitimate public interest if nothing had been revealed about the matrimonial difficulties?

Katherine Trunk

To which the answer must be that the public has a legitimate interest in not being deliberately deceived. Andrew Morton, who wrote the book that blew the lid off, and those newspapers which picked up the story and ran with it, were telling the truth, while the Palace spokesmen were telling lies.

One result is that no one now believes a word the official spokesmen say. The timing and wording of the announcement about the separation were, in several respects, puzzling. The explanations offered have been treated with skepticism and further speculation. Evasiveness about the constitutional implications and airy dismissal of the possibility—the likelihood—of a future divorce have provoked scorn. There are serious questions which need answering: and to call them "hypothetical" is no answer.

Prince Charles may be willing to accept a life of celibacy. It seems most improbable that Diana will. Indeed, since they have not been willing or able, in the name of royal duty, to bear the discipline of a loveless marriage, why should they be expected to lead loveless separate lives?

But if there is, as most people anticipate, a divorce in two years' time, what then? Could the Prince remarry? Could his second wife become Queen? Could the archbishop of Canterbury crown a divorced, let alone a remarried, monarch? If he did, the Church of England would be split even more bitterly than it is divided now over the question of women priests. But if he refused, could the Church of England remain an established church—with the monarch as its Supreme Governor?

Even now, the British people are not much inclined to republicanism. They may deplore the behavior of the younger members of the royal family, but their antipathy toward politicians is much greater; they would not wish to see a politician become head of state. The monarchy will therefore survive its present troubles. To suppose, however, as the Palace and the prime minister and the archbishop seem to do, that the spotlight of public interest can now be switched away is totally unrealistic. The separate lives of the Prince and Princess, and the emotion-charged partisan feelings involved, may prove even more fascinating than the pathetic episode which has just concluded. The Charles and Di story will run and run. □

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The Hiss File

INNOCENT AFTER ALL?

Western press reports of General Volkogonov's revelations and retractions are like the old shell game: Keep your eye on the Kremlin files (which may have been destroyed), and ignore the massive evidence we have.

JACOB COHEN

ON OCTOBER 14, 1992, General Dmitri Volkogonov, the designated teller of Soviet secrets, declared that long-standing charges that Alger Hiss spied for the Soviets a half-century ago were and are "completely groundless." Hiss was the victim of "either false information or judicial error," he said, adding operatically, "You can tell Alger Hiss [now 88 and nearly blind] that the heavy weight should be lifted from his head." Two months later, the general conceded that he had not made as thorough a search of the matter as he had first implied [see "Soviet Historiography, Western Journalism," by Amos Perlmutter, p. 30], adding that given the size, depth, and gaps in the Soviet archives, we may never know for certain whether Hiss was and is innocent.

However, the question of Hiss's guilt or innocence does not rest on Soviet archives. It rests on the mountain of publicly available documents in this country. The same is true for a second categorical, unqualified (and astonishing) declaration from Volkogonov which is not addressed in his partial retreat. Not only was Hiss not a spy, he said in October, but his accuser, Whittaker Chambers, was not a spy either. In other words, Chambers not only lied, in massive, apparently documented (and apparently verified) detail, about Hiss, he also lied, in massive, apparently documented (and copiously verified) detail, about himself.

But if Hiss is innocent and if Chambers's confession was an elaborate lie, there is hell to pay, for Hiss cannot be innocent without there having been major miscreancy in concocting the copious evidences of his guilt. Can that be?

Mr. Cohen is chairman of the Department of American Studies at Brandeis University. He is currently working on a book entitled The Performance of Innocence, *which includes a chapter on Alger Hiss.*

Witness

IN 1948, Chambers confessed publicly to having worked full-time as a Soviet agent from 1932 to 1938. He told of his many secret identities and his frequent changes of residence in that connection. He also named his spy bosses—"Ulrich and Elaine," "Bill," Peters (who, allegedly, supervised the Communist Party underground in this country), Bykov (allegedly from Soviet Military Intelligence), describing them, their aliases, and their activities in elaborate detail. Indeed, he described the entire Soviet spy apparatus, reported gossip about rivalries and tensions between overlapping jurisdictions, and told lurid tales about the disciplining and occasional murdering of alleged turncoats.

And he described his own spy activities as a liaison to two secret cells of Communists in government, whose leaders and participants (including Hiss) he named. Members of these cells, he said, were expected to move into positions of influence and there serve the Soviet cause. He spoke of delivering gifts from the Soviets, expensive Oriental rugs, to four of his contacts (Hiss was one). He had worked, he said, as a courier relaying information and documents between spies in Washington and New York, and as a recruiter of new spies. He also described his role in producing some of the fake passports which Communist agents used in getting around the world, and his efforts in setting up respectable front operations for spy activities in England and Japan. (Again, all of this in elaborate, and therefore eminently testable, detail.) Most compellingly, he told of his activ-

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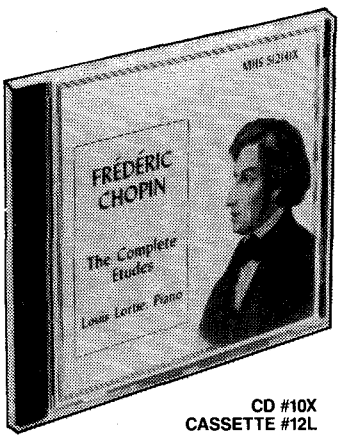

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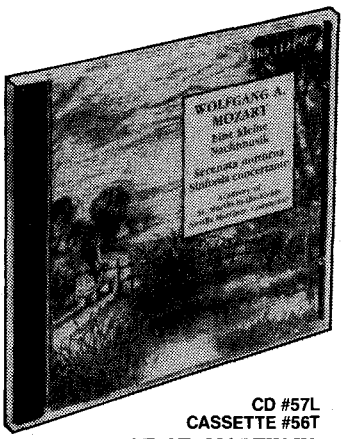

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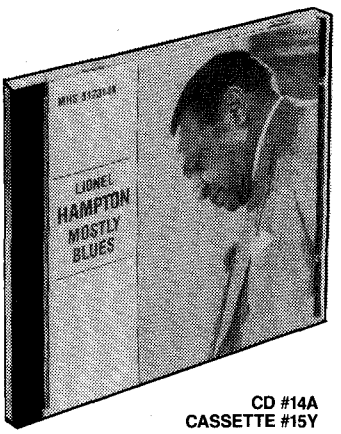

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ities in soliciting, receiving, and arranging for the filming of "four to five hundred" secret documents supplied by government collaborators (whom he named, Hiss included). He said he transmitted these documents, the contents of which he described, to his contacts in Soviet intelligence.

In 1938, Chambers said, he prepared to break away from the Communist movement, and he described elaborately his activities in that dangerous regard. One thing he did to protect himself, he said, was to keep some of the secret documents which had been supplied to him for transmittal to the Soviets. (Allegedly, Alger Hiss was the principal supplier.) Chambers said that he then sent messages to his spymasters informing them that any harm to him or his family would result in revelations about their operations. At that time, 1938–39, he also prepared two long magazine articles describing Soviet spying, and informed a major government official of some of the espionage activities.

Driving in the Nails

EVERY ELEMENT of Chambers's tale has, seemingly, been verified by abundant independent testimony and documentary sources. What would need to be true in order for these confirmations to be fake?

Chambers's claim of having lived a secretive life, with the use of several aliases and frequent changes of address, is incontrovertible if one is to believe the confirming documents and the reports of many people—maids, renting agents, friends, contacts. Why would they lie? Who told them to? And why would Chambers live this way if he were not a spy?

"Elaine," who with her husband, "Ulrich," supervised Chambers's early spying, was really Nadya Ulanovsky, who in 1977, living in Israel, confirmed Chambers's accounts of their underground work together to Allen Weinstein (whose mighty account of the Hiss case, *Perjury*, remains unshaken 15 years after its publication). Elaine's testimony supports other details given by Chambers as well, such as his description of Bykov as a major player in the efforts of Soviet Military Intelligence. Did Mrs. Ulanovsky lie? Did Mr. Weinstein?

There are many other people who testified to Bykov's active role in organizing and supervising espionage: Maxim Lieber, Walter Krivitsky, William Edward Crane (who also testified to having received money from Chambers to support his underground activities), Julian Wadleigh (who also confessed to giving secret documents to Chambers). Bykov himself, in Moscow in 1939, bragged to Ulrich and Elaine about having placed agents in the very center of the American Government. Are these multiple confirmations phantasms?

Then there is Peters, the indubitable aboveground Communist official who for years denied underground espionage activity. Soviet files recently examined by American scholars Harvey Klehr and John Haynes prove that Peters was indeed, as Chambers described him, a major figure in the underground, working under the cover of the open Communist Party. But even without these Soviet files, Peters's espionage role, *and his direct contact with Chambers in that connection,* is confirmed: for example, by David Zablodowsky, who said he delivered messages from Chambers to Peters in 1936; by Maxim Lieber, the publisher, who also confirms Chambers's cooperation with him in establishing publishing fronts for contemplated Soviet spying in Japan and England. And there is this detail: In one of his confessions, Chambers recalled a fake birth certificate prepared for Peters's daughter; checking Chambers's recollection, the FBI later found records of that document in Atlantic City.

The existence of the two parallel and separate Communist cells and Chambers's contact with them have been confirmed in the numerous subsequent testimonies of actual members and their wives. Ella Winter and others testified about Chambers's efforts to recruit them for spying. The photographer who worked with Chambers on fake passports has testified to that effect. Did Chambers deliver four Oriental rugs, on Bykov's orders, to his agents? Chambers's friend Meyer Schapiro, the great art historian, recalls arranging for the purchase of the rugs, and all four of those to whom Chambers said he gave them (including Hiss, as we shall see) clearly received them. State Department official Julian Wadleigh conceded that he understood the rug to be a gift from the Soviets.

But the most telling evidence are the confessions of those who admit having given Chambers secret documents (Wadleigh and Vincent Reno) and of three men who remember having photographed secret documents for Chambers (Felix Inslerman, William Edward Crane, and David Carpenter). Then, of course, there are the documents themselves, which Chambers produced in 1948, handwritten by two of those he was to accuse of spying, Hiss and Harry Dexter White; films of secret documents traceable to his alleged sources; and documents typed on Alger Hiss's typewriter.

Hiss defenders have frequently argued that the FBI, or some other sinister alphabetical agency, brilliantly concocted these documents in 1948 to support Chambers's allegations. But several of Chambers's friends testify that he told them in 1938 that he had secreted those documents; three people actually saw a cache of documents at that time; and the articles on Soviet espionage which Chambers wrote in 1938 refer indirectly but demonstrably to the contents of documents he was to reveal a decade later.

As for the details of Chambers's break with the underground and the Party, they would seem to have been decisively confirmed by the testimony of: Mike Intrator, to the effect that the Soviets had grown suspicious of him; Meyer Schapiro, who aided his flight; Inslerman and Schapiro, who forwarded his warnings to the Party; Maxim Lieber, who said he was ordered by Bykov to find Chambers after he disappeared. In 1939, Herbert Solow notarized a lengthy description of Chambers's detailed self-reports, which correspond with the tale he was to tell a decade later; and Adolf Berle, friend of

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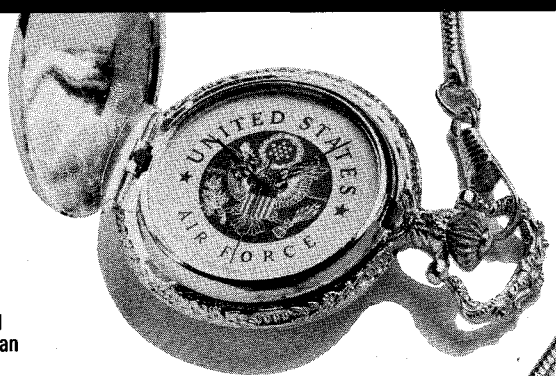

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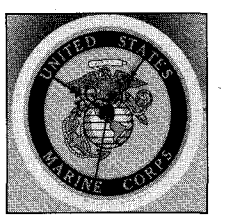

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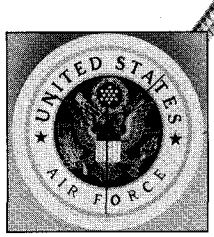

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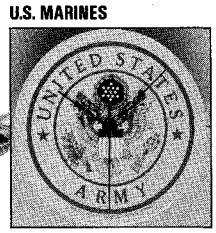

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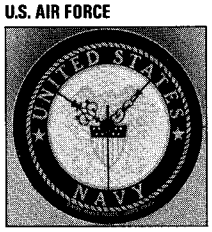

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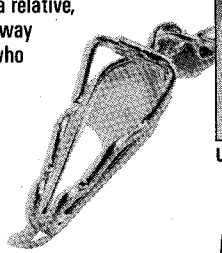

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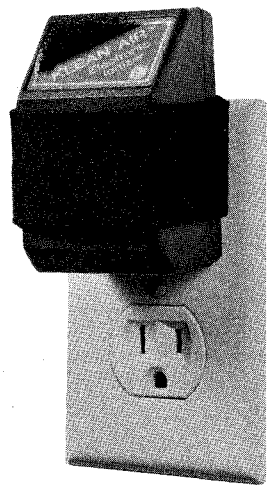

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President Roosevelt, produced extensive notes of his meeting with Chambers in 1939, written at the time and then typed up under the heading: "Underground Espionage Agent."

This then is the man who, according to Volkogonov, had no contact whatsoever with Soviet intelligence, and whose highly elaborated confession must therefore be a chimera. But what of Hiss?

Hiss, of course, denied the charges at the time and has denied them, perfervidly, ever since. He has denied being a spy, denied being a Communist ("I have never done the slightest thing or said the slightest word to further Communism"), even denied ever knowing that any of his many close friends and associates who were named as Communists, and who later admitted to being Communists (Henry Collins, Harold Ware, Lee Pressman, John Herrmann, Victor Perlo, Noel Field, Nathan Witt, John Abt, Nathan Gregory Silvermaster), were. Indeed one of Hiss's lines of defense was that Chambers, whom he contemptuously described as an admitted Communist spy, should not be believed over a loyal American like himself. General Volkogonov's statement that even Chambers was not a spy must have startled Hiss as it startles us.

Soviet Historiography, Western Journalism

IT TOOK ALMOST a month for the Western press, in the form of the *New York Times*, to catch up with the "clarification" (i.e. retraction) by General Dmitri Volkogonov of his exoneration of Alger Hiss. The exoneration was first reported in late October; Volkogonov began retreating from it on November 24 in the Russian-language *Independent Gazette*, published in Moscow. The story was picked up and reprinted by the Federal Broadcast Information Service in Washington on December 3. And the *New York Times* relayed it to an astonished world on December 17.

We should not, however, cavil at the *New York Times*. When NATIONAL REVIEW asked an ABC News spokesman what plans they had for correcting their starry-eyed account of how Hiss's innocence had finally been established, he said that there were no such plans. And I will guess that *The New Yorker*'s triumphant vindication of Hiss (by his son) will be retracted on a cold day in hell. Certainly the story "Hiss Still Guilty" will be much less prominently displayed than the politically correct (but factually incorrect) "Hiss Innocent." All in all, this episode tells us a great deal about both Soviet historiography and Western journalism.

Volkogonov had originally stated, in a letter faxed on September 25 to John Lowenthal—a long-standing Hiss groupie described in the press as a historian and filmmaker—that he had studied all Soviet files and concluded "on the basis of a most careful analysis of the data . . . that Alger Hiss was never an agent of the intelligence services of the Soviet Union."

Volkogonov has been variously described as a "reformer," a "moderate," and a "historian" (see Fred Hiatt, *Washington Post*, March 16, 1991). His fame rested principally on his biography of Stalin, which, according to the *Washington Post*'s former Moscow correspondent David Remnick, was written "with official blessing" (*Washington Post*, June 30, 1988). Writing later in *The New York Review of Books* (November 5, 1992), Remnick told us that when he met Volkogonov in 1988, "the publicity flacks around the Foreign Ministry" were pitching him as their "breakthrough historian."

Is Volkogonov really a reformer and liberal? He does not advertise his past as a military apparatchik, but we know he was in charge of military history, a job not usually assigned to liberals, reformers, and the like, even in the freer atmosphere of Gorbachev's time. Such a job usually amounts to being a propagandist and apologist.

His cachet as a reformist historian lies in the curious evolution of the *History of the Great Patriotic War*—i.e., the history of the USSR in World War II. There had already been two versions of this epic project when Volkogonov came in contact with it. The first—in 13 volumes—was the Stalinist version. The second version, which basically annulled the first, came out under Brezhnev and included two volumes on the latter's "illustrious" war career.

Gorbachev himself assigned Volkogonov to edit the third effort. Volkogonov's semi-critical first volume was heavily censored by the reactionary *nomenklatura*, the same military leaders who would later take part in the abortive anti-Gorbachev coup in 1991. Volkogonov's first volume was branded the work of a "traitor" by the mediocre Marshal Yazov, Gorbachev's last defense minister.

But this censoring by the reactionaries turned Volkogonov into a certified liberal martyr. "As a deputy in the Russian Parliament and as Yeltsin's military advisor, Volkogonov had thrown in his lot with the radical democrats," wrote Reminick in *The New York Review of Books*. In effect, a military apparatchik had become an anti-totalitarian liberal.

I happened to have met Volkogonov in the summer of 1989 in Moscow. I was conducting research into the relationship between FDR and Stalin during the war, and I wanted to interview the general, the keeper of the keys to Stalin's World War II archives.

According to Remnick, Volkogonov had extensive NKVD and KGB files at his disposal. But I had seen some early excerpts of his Stalin biography and had not found there any of the dramatic revelations that would be expected from what Western journalists were describing as a "revolutionary" work. Perhaps I would find out more from the general in person. Accompanied by his assistants, he welcomed me to a large room at the military history quarters.

He was a small, ebullient, pugna-

Mr. Perlmutter is a professor of political science at American University, editor of the Journal of Strategic Studies, *and author of a just-completed book on the relationship between FDR and Stalin.*

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Hiss denied Chambers's claim that the two had closely associated for three years. He conceded that he had known Chambers briefly, but only as a self-described journalist named "Crosley." True, he had sublet his old apartment to Crosley and his wife during the summer of 1935 and given him an old Ford car into the bargain; true, Crosley had never paid the rent except indirectly, with the gift of an Oriental rug in 1935; true, he had traveled to New York with Crosley once, for reasons he had forgotten; and true, Crosley had stayed in Hiss's new apartment overnight: but those facts only betoken Hiss's characteristic kindness to struggling strangers, not evidence of a closer relationship. "Crosley" proved to be a deadbeat, Hiss said; he never saw him again, under any name, after 1936.

However, Chambers's story (and that of his wife, Esther) of much deeper and longer contact seem verified by the cascade of detail they produced in 1948 about Hiss's hobbies, eating habits, relatives, intimate nicknames, childhood memories, and pets; his medical problems (was he deaf in the left ear?) and those of his children; his wife's previous marriage and her alimony arrangements; maids and doctors; the layout, furniture, and books in the apartments Hiss lived in after 1936.

cious man who appeared not to speak English—something he may have affected at the time. He told me that he had at his disposal several hundred researchers and that, as his *Stalin* would soon be published in English by his "great friend" Lord Weidenfeld, of Weidenfeld and Nicolson in London and New York, I had only to wait for his book. He also revealed excitedly that he was writing a biography of Leon Trotsky, and when I asked if it would cover Trotsky's "military year," Volkogonov praised me for my "great perception."

The book, when it was published in English, was a disappointment. Steven Miner, author of *Between Churchill and Stalin*, who reviewed *Stalin* in the *Washington Post*, finds that many of Volkogonov's historical judgments are mere repetitions of old propagandist claims. For instance, he defends Stalin's bare-faced assertion that a majority in the Baltics favored incorporation into the Soviet Union in August of 1940. He describes Stalin's invasion of Poland as "largely justified." And he blames the West for the cold war.

Walter Laqueur, in *The Road to Freedom* (1989), notes that Volkogonov refers to Stalin's crimes and madness, but "this does not prevent him from accepting interpretations which are manifestly absurd," such as the claims that the purges were provoked by Trotskyist and Nazi agents. It is Volkogonov's "spurious explanations" which Laqueur finds disturbing. In fact, there is no serious evidence that Stalin was motivated to launch the purges out of fear of Trotsky. "Volkogonov describes Trotsky as the 'great master of intrigue,' yet in actual fact, Trotsky seldom engaged in intrigues," writes Laqueur in his *Stalin* (1990).

There are whole critical areas which Volkogonov treats in cavalier fashion. His chapter on "Stalin and the Army" (full of footnotes from the Central State Archives of the Army, which have never been opened to ordinary Soviet citizens, let alone to foreign scholars) is downright commonplace and adds nothing to what has already been written by Soviet generals and Western writers. There are only twenty pages on the relations between Stalin and his generals, a mere ten pages (containing nothing new) on Stalin and the West and the issue of the Second Front (even though this was the most critical political and strategic division between Stalin and his World War II allies), and only three pages on Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam.

Yet it is Volkogonov's treatment of the murder of Kirov—Stalin's first Bolshevik victim, whose murder was the precursor of purges to come—that is most significant in the context of the Hiss case. For he concludes that Stalin certainly murdered Kirov but, as Remnick notes, "he did not come up with a 'smoking gun' . . ." He reached his verdict on the overwhelming preponderance of circumstantial evidence—which in the Hiss case, as Professor Jacob Cohen establishes in the accompanying article, points irrefutably to Hiss's guilt. Where Hiss is concerned, however, Volkogonov demanded the documentary "smoking gun" that he rightly found unnecessary in the Kirov murder. Or did he?

The statement by Volkogonov which "exonerates" Hiss was delivered to John Lowenthal, who then claimed that Volkogonov was willing to stake his "reputation as a general, historian and politician" on his "comprehensive" research. That claim would have been dubious on the last point alone. As Professor Richard Pipes was quoted as saying (by David Margolick, *New York Times*, October 29), "there are archives within archives within archives," a fact to which I can ruefully attest from my researches into the Stalin–Roosevelt relationship in the Moscow archives. But Lowenthal's claims received a more "comprehensive" drubbing in Volkogonov's recent retraction: "What I saw gives no basis to claim a full clarification. There's no guarantee that it was not destroyed, that it was not in other channels. . . . His attorney, Lowenthal, pushed me hard to say things of which I was not fully convinced."

Volkogonov admits that his motive in yielding to this pressure was primarily "humanitarian," the desire to comfort an old man nearing death. Having met Volkogonov, I can well imagine that an expansive Russian sentimentality might push him toward giving such false comfort, while a Soviet habit of flexibility in matters historical would not restrain him from doing so. As a historian, I cannot approve of such falsehood. But I find his motives far more congenial than the motives of those Western reporters who embraced Volkogonov's original "clarification" with gleeful lack of skepticism and who will now cover other stories rather than their own embarrassment.

—Amos Perlmutter

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On every salient point of Chambers's account which Hiss chose to challenge, Chambers's version has found triumphant verification. Hiss had indeed had difficulty hearing in his left ear. If Hiss gave Chambers the Ford early in the summer of 1935, as he claimed, it would have been before he purchased a new automobile, not after. (One also wonders why Hiss continued to pay insurance on the car for a year after he gave it to a stranger for nothing.) Chambers's claim that in 1936 Hiss asked that the Ford be turned over for use by the Communist Party seems sufficiently documented by the discovery of a document notarized by a State Department colleague of Hiss, dated mid 1936, with Hiss's signature on it, assigning the car to an auto agency owned by Communists. William Rosen, also a sometime Communist, admitted to having obtained the car from the agency.

Hiss's denial of family intimacy or any contact after 1936 seems refuted by the testimony by Chambers's maid of visits by both Hiss and his wife to Chambers's apartment in Baltimore and by testimony of Hiss's pediatrician concerning an encounter with Chambers. Chambers claimed that Hiss loaned him $400 to purchase a car in November 1937, and a withdrawal in that amount, completely emptying Hiss's account, seems to support Chambers's claim, as do testimonies and documents refuting Hiss's counter-contention that the withdrawal was to purchase household items for a new apartment. (It turns out the apartment in question was not made available by its owner until weeks after the withdrawal, and Hiss was forced to borrow money in late December to supply the new apartment.)

No Johnny-Come-Lately

IT IS important to remember that Chambers first named Hiss as a Communist in 1939 to Adolf Berle. He offered detailed testimony about Hiss and many others to the FBI in interviews in 1941, 1945, 1946, and 1947. Furthermore, claims that Hiss was a Communist agent came from other sources than Chambers; French intelligence advanced this rumor as early as 1940, and in 1945 a defecting Soviet, Igor Gouzenko, referred to an agent in place close to Secretary Stettinius, which sounds very much like Alger Hiss. Hiss's claim, meanwhile, that he had never heard the name "Chambers" before 1948 is refuted by revelations that he was told by the FBI in 1947 that a man named Chambers had accused him of being a secret Communist; indeed, he was told of Chambers's claims again in 1948, just three months before he publicly denied ever having heard the name or knowing the man.

But the most decisive proof of Chambers's charges that Hiss had been not only a Communist (many people were in the Thirties, many of them innocent idealists) but a conscious and active spy are the documents which Chambers produced in 1948. They include four handwritten documents which Hiss admits writing, detailed summaries, with long quotations, from secret cables that came across his desk at the State Department; also 65 typed documents, either verbatim copies of secret cables or summaries in a form similar to the handwritten notes, apparently typed on Alger Hiss's typewriter, with interlinear corrections in what is arguably Hiss's handwriting; and several rolls of film, which, as we have noted, were filmed by the camera of Felix Inslerman. Many of these filmed documents contained Hiss's initials and office stamp.

If Hiss was not a spy, turning over handwritten summaries of materials of interest to the Soviets, bringing home documents every ten days for overnight filming and next-day return, typing documents for subsequent filming—how did Chambers obtain these documents (in 1938, remember)?

Hiss's answers to this pivotal question over the years seem ludicrous. He has said that the notes were made routinely in his job in the State Department (though much of the contents of the notes and their form are clearly unrelated to his duties) and were somehow stolen from his office wastepaper basket in 1938, perhaps, he said, by an innocuous-seeming colored man working for Chambers. The typewritten documents, he said, were typed, in 1938, by Chambers or confederates of his, admittedly on Hiss's typewriter, which somehow Chambers had obtained and returned undetected. The documents they summarized or quoted were either stolen from his office, or taken from the desks of others who routinely saw them (like Julian Wadleigh, the confessed spy), or stolen from the burn room at the State Department before being routinely destroyed. The interlinear corrections, presumably, are forgeries. The films were similarly obtained, all for the purpose of framing him. In 1938. Later, Hiss changed this story, claiming that he had given the typewriter to his maid late in 1937, months before the documents in question were typed, which would mean that Chambers had stolen it from and returned it undetected to the domicile of the maid. (Hiss never explained how Chambers could have known of the gift to the maid, if, as Hiss claims, he had no contact with Chambers after 1936.)

Later still, when, under pressure, Hiss produced the typewriter, and when that typewriter proved to have typed the crucial documents, Hiss dropped the awkward claim that Chambers had somehow stolen and returned his typewriter and offered the argument that the typewriter was a forgery, an exact lookalike, which had been specially built (when?) to produce typing which looked like that of other documents typed on Hiss's typewriter (so we need to steal those as well) and then planted, in 1948, for him to discover and turn in so that he would incriminate himself.

Hiss and those who agree with him on this point do not scruple to explain when this alleged forgery took place. If it was in 1948, how to explain proofs of the documents' existence in 1938? If it was 1938, who could have perpetrated such a forgery and why, when the microfilms and handwritten notes are proof enough? And why leave a forged typewriter for Hiss to discover, when that could only give him an opportunity to find signs of the forgery? And where is the real typewriter?

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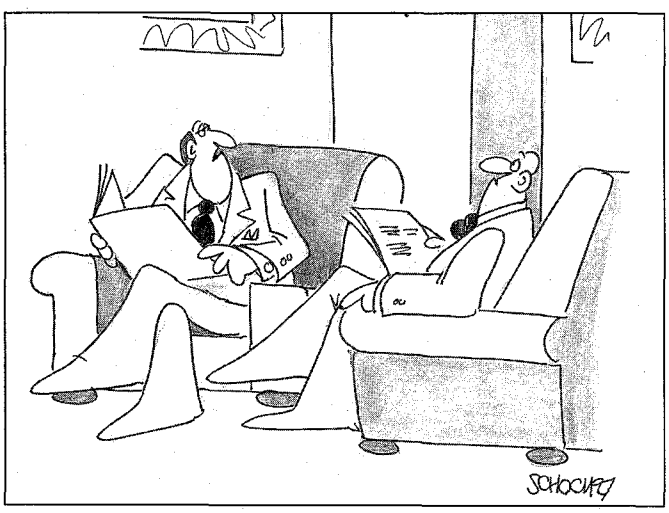
Perhaps it is with the magic bullet from the Kennedy assassination.

And what of the question of questions: If, as Hiss insisted, the two men knew each other only briefly and superficially, why would Chambers—apparently a real spy working with real other spies—go to such extraordinary lengths to frame the innocent Hiss of spying?

Un-PC Answer

PROGRESSIVE supporters of Hiss cannot be proud of the answer he and psychiatrist friends have given from the first moment this obvious question was posed. Chambers's behavior, Hiss says, is that of a spurned homosexual. Having secretly and silently fallen in love with Hiss after their casual encounter, Chambers took Hiss's rejection very hard. For the



"I remember many years ago I once felt guilty."

next two years, he proceeded to organize a massive plot: trailing Hiss, unbeknownst to his quarry; informing himself about every detail of Hiss's life; stealing handwritten notes from the wastepaper basket in his office (though the notes Chambers produced were carefully folded and not crumpled); concocting documents (with the help of Julian Wadleigh and other spies in the State Department); and then in dribs and drabs over a decade informing on him for the purpose ultimately of destroying him. We are instructed that, owing to his homosexuality, Chambers was a pathological liar, a pathological destroyer of unavailable love objects. Much later, government agencies collaborated with Chambers, concocting documents and faking a typewriter, suborning immense perjuries, though apparently *their* motives were political and not homosexual.

As it happens, after Hiss initially voiced his theories on this matter, evidence of Chambers's sometime homosexuality surfaced. A devoted husband and father as well, he never denied his great affection for Hiss, indeed offered it as explanation for his early reluctance to destroy Hiss by adding the accusation of spy to his earlier charge of Communist. He produced the documents, proof of Hiss's spying, he pointed out, only when Hiss pushed him to the wall with a slander suit.

Hiss and his supporters often argue that Chambers was a confessed perjurer. How can you believe a perjurer? they ask. What they fail to add is that the perjury that Chambers confessed to was *hiding Hiss from the charge of being a spy*. If Chambers lied when he said that Hiss had *not* been a spy, then the truth is that Alger Hiss *was* a spy. Similarly, Hiss and his supporters often argue that Hiss was never convicted of spying but only of perjury. But that argument too is a trick: the perjury he was tried for concerned his insistence that he never had seen Chambers after 1936 and his insistence that he had not committed espionage. Because the statute of limitations had run out on his activities there could be no formal charge of spying. But make no mistake: the perjury trial was an espionage trial.

Notwithstanding all the foregoing, the amnesiac media allowed General Volkogonov to rewrite American history with a one-page press release, and now, after his reservation, they are asking us to withhold historical judgment until a more complete search of Soviet files enables us to understand ourselves. We may never know the full truth, we now hear, for many files have been destroyed. What these cautious lucubrations fail to address is that the answer is not in Soviet files but in our own. In absolving Hiss of guilt and, as it were, blaming Chambers of innocence, one must, inescapably, allege a web of conspiratorial plots on high which defy common reason.

General Volkogonov's performance—two steps forward and one step back—needs further review. Did he not review notes of meetings held within Soviet Military Intelligence, the Politburo, the KGB, when the case became prominent in 1948? The question of the identity and activities of Hiss and Chambers could not fail to have arisen at that time.

What else could explain this unscholarly performance? It should be remembered that Hiss himself requested the review. We know that Hiss's champion, John Lowenthal, met with Volkogonov for "a half-hour," in Moscow, prior to the general's search through the archives. According to Lowenthal the general plied him with questions about the case. What questions were asked, and what were Lowenthal's answers? We have not been told. Interestingly, the only specific statement of fact in Volkogonov's brief encyclical was that there was no evidence that Hiss was in touch with Soviet intelligence while he performed important international duties during the 1940s. As we have seen, the documentable charges against Hiss all refer to the 1930s. What did Lowenthal say that might have persuaded the general to clear Hiss of another charge?

One prominent émigré historian I spoke to asked me why, if Hiss is guilty, he would demand a search that would probably nail him to the wall. I answered cautiously that for reasons developed in this article I believe Hiss was indeed guilty, adding that he has been taking risks of precisely this kind from the beginning of the case; his is a performance of innocence for the ages. And, I added, perhaps Volkogonov and his government are up to more than we know. □

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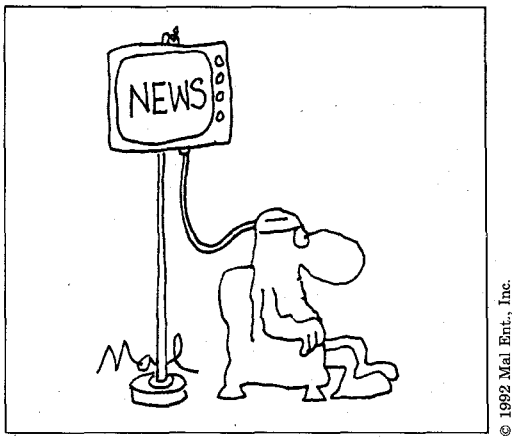

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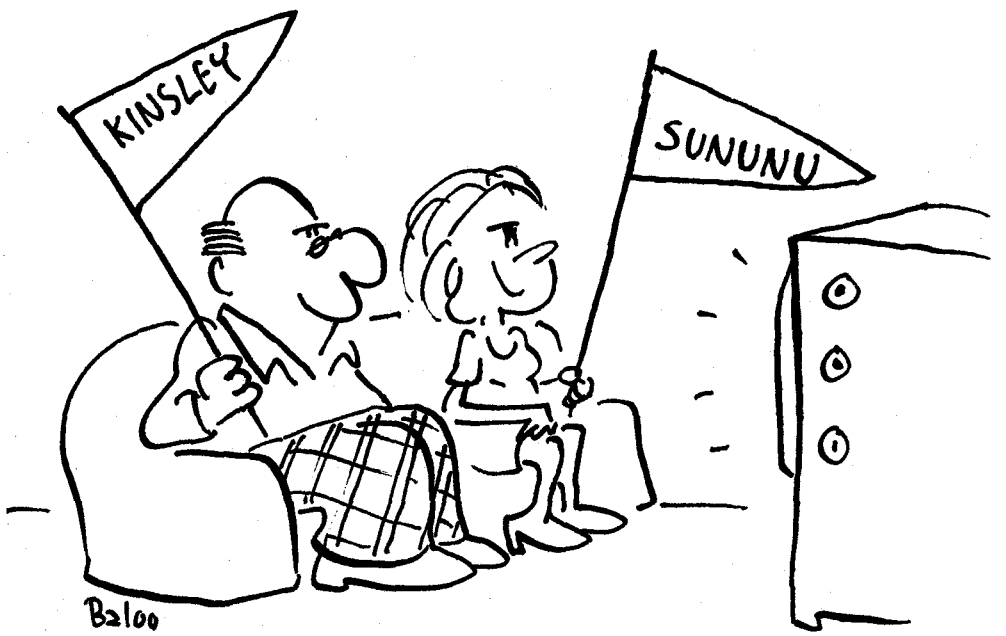
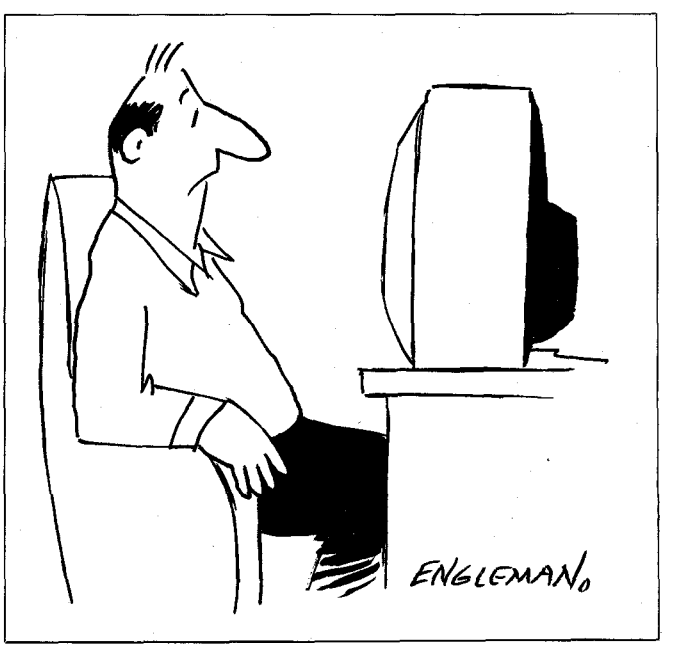


Ho, Ho, Ho

Hardly had Bush and the relatives bade
Christmas farewells, than a trickle of trade
(Helped by a catheter tastefully placed)
Started to dribble—then fitfully raced
Out of the pipe, which immensely relieved
Boskin and Darman, who silently heaved.

W. H. VON DREELE



"In Washington today, two special prosecutors indicted each other."

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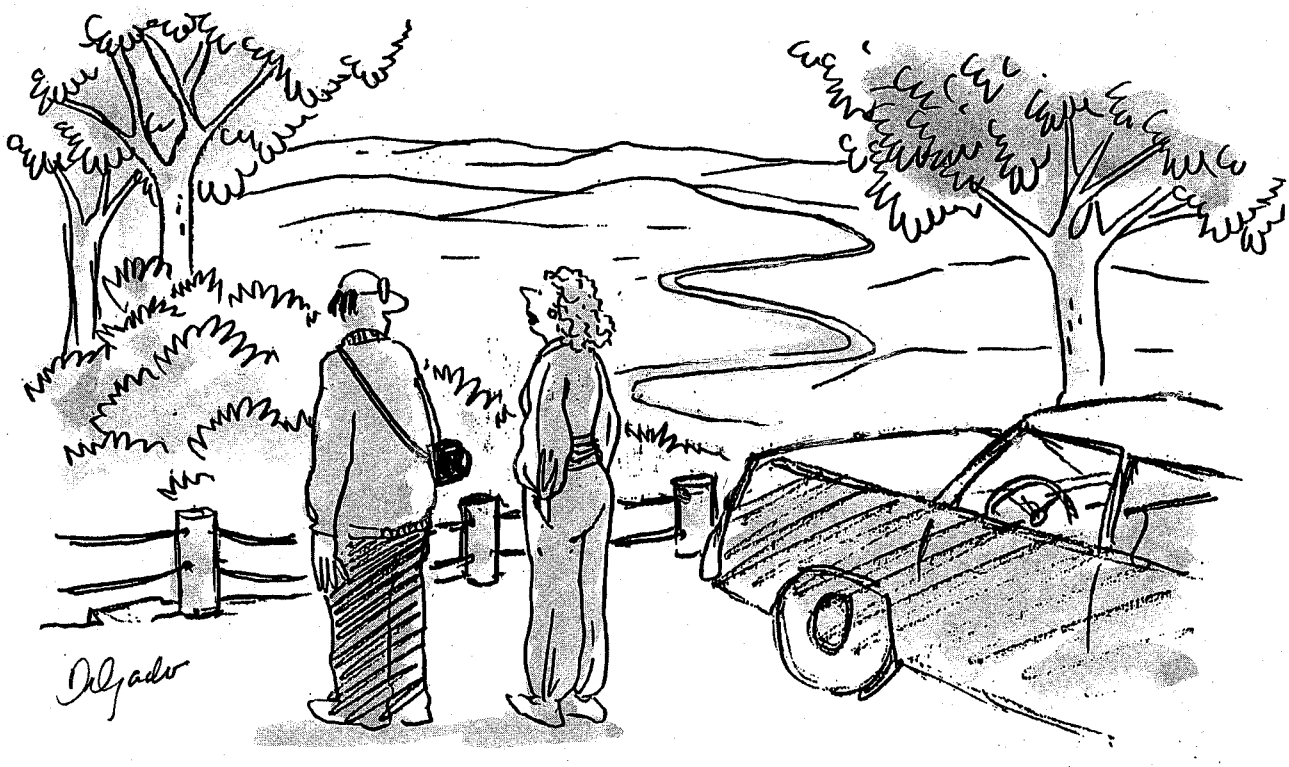

"SO THIS IS THE ENVIRONMENT!"

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The Little Rock Summit

SEMINAR IN SYCOPHANCY

The Little Rock summit was meant to be a major search for new ideas; but what happened to those who mentioned cutting tax rates, entitlements, or regulation? (Shhh.)

ALAN REYNOLDS

THE LITTLE ROCK talkathon was billed as a quest for new ideas, but it was anything but that. It was instead a payoff for campaign contributors, an audition for aspiring bureaucrats, and an Orwellian effort to reassure the public that many Clinton supporters agree with Mr. Clinton.

"We'll explore every idea," said Mr. Clinton, but even the mainstream press choked on that one. The *Chicago Tribune* rudely observed that "all of the economists at the meeting had endorsed Clinton's program." All of them; every one. "Not only was there not a supply-sider in the lot," added the *New York Times*, "there was not even one advocating the basic Republican precept of low taxes and small government."

After Clinton aide George Stephanopoulous spoke about a "diverse group," a reporter asked him to name three Republicans present. He struggled to come up with two—Apple Computer chairman John Scully and former Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis. Yet Scully was one of the first businessmen to come out for Clinton, and Lewis's enthusiasm for federal highway programs scarcely threatens Clinton's revival of New Deal makework projects.

Mr. Reynolds is director of Economic Research at the Hudson Institute in Indianapolis.

Ancient relics of the Keynesian era were there in force, trying to make Clinton seem downright frugal by comparison. James Tobin, Robert Eisner, and Jeffrey Faux opted for about $60 billion a year in additional deficit spending for at least a couple of years. Sixty billion here, sixty billion there, and it begins to add up to real money. Remember the hundred economists, lead by Robert Solow and James Tobin, who signed a 1991 petition calling for bigger deficits? These are the same authorities Clinton cited whenever anyone complained, as *The Economist* put it, that "his arithmetic is zany." They like Clinton's plan precisely because the deficit will go up, not down.

The relatively sane stuck closer to the boss's $20- to $30-billion annual additions to the deficit, with Henry Aaron of the Brookings Institution alone wondering if so much "fiscal stimulus" was really a good idea. Clinton later observed that these minor variations (between more government and much more) "were the extremes" among those invited. And, at this conference, extremism in defense of more federal spending was no vice.

At the end of the conference, Messrs. Clinton and Gore proclaimed that the collection of testimonials and complaints had amounted to some sort of "consensus." This was as predictable as taking a poll on the merits of pork chops in a mosque. The consensus was said to consist of 1) more federal money for public investment and training, 2) less bank regulation to ease credit for small companies, 3) a "credible plan" to reduce the deficit at some remotely distant date, and 4) provision of health insurance for everyone (without permitting that added demand to inflate costs). Senator Gore thought he also detected "impressive support" for environmental fixes, but he must have been tuned in to some other show.

In a few rare cases where there was some hint of dissent, the quest for consensus cut it off. Allen Sinai, once an enthusiastic proponent of a lower capital-gains tax, could barely bring himself to mention indexing of capital gains as a possible option. Alice Rivlin, the new Deputy Director of OMB, has an enlightening new book which advocates getting the Federal Government out of such things as infrastructure and education. No such embarrassing heresies were heard here.

Dividing the Pot

ACTUALLY, most of the show had nothing to do with economics, but was instead a debate over how to carve up the U.S. taxpayer. The head of Amtrak openly asked for a billion dollars from the "infrastructure" pot. Several cable-TV programmers liked the idea of getting

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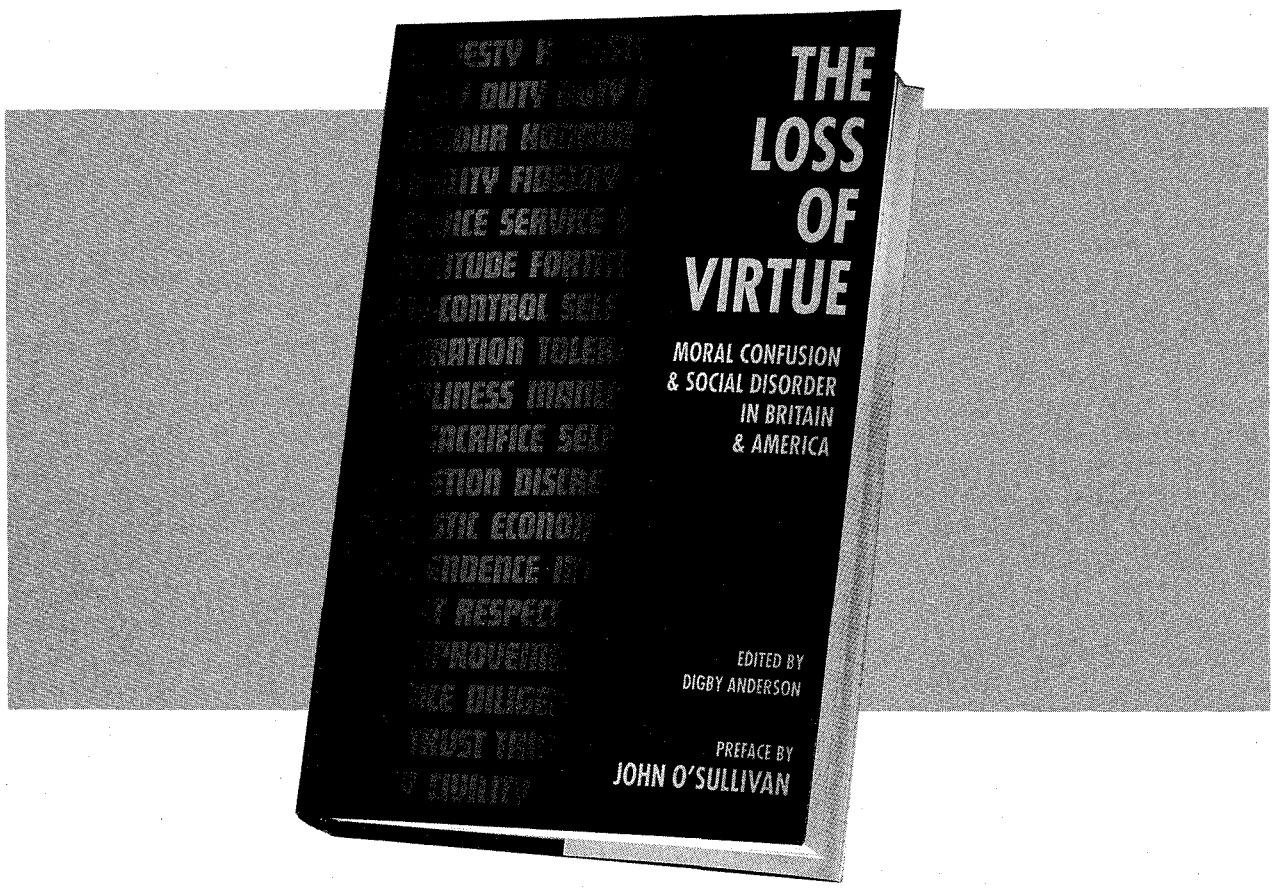
The Loss of Virtue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EDITED BY DIGBY ANDERSON
PREFACE BY JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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taxpayers to fund a fiber-optic network. A supermarket owner wanted to make sure that tax credits for research and development were somehow tailored to his industry too (high-tech soup cans?).

Special interests are not always what they appear to be. A Knight–Ridder report said "there were altruistic moments. Ford Motor Co. President Harold Poling showed a spirit of sacrifice by calling for a 50-cent gas tax increase over the next five years to help pay the nation's bills." What Mr. Poling actually said was that the tax would increase the demand for fuel-efficient cars. Like Lee Iacocca, who makes similar demands for tough CAFE standards, Poling simply wants to entice people to trade in their older gas guzzlers for shiny new cars.

The special-interest pleading, from those looking for a good return on their investments in the campaign, virtually dictated a gloomy assessment. "Clinton Leads Seminar on Grim State of the Economy," screamed a typical headline. How could all these folks mooch subsidies and tax breaks unless times are tough? Unfortunately, the news on the business page continued to be unsuitably rosy. Industrial production was reported up again at nearly a 5 per cent rate, domestic car and truck sales up big, housing starts, retail sales, and factory orders all up, with inventories and the trade deficit down.

As Clinton Sees It

THE President-elect remains obstinately obtuse about all this. He still insists that "the evidence is not in" on whether we are "recovering from this recession." Yet such evidence has been in for nearly two years.

The period between the last quarters of 1978 and 1982 was a real mess, with double-digit inflation and interest rates, and four years of stagnation. By comparison, it takes a magnifying glass even to see the recession of late 1990 to early 1991. What is quite visible, though, on any economic chart, is that the economy has been rising steadily for about two years. That was the recovery, and it is over. We are no longer recovering from the recession at all, but have instead regained all the lost ground and are hitting new highs. That the President-elect insists on questioning unquestionable facts is really scary. It suggests that he regards reality as a matter of opinion.

The conventional wisdom is becoming oppressively conventional, and increasingly unwise. In Clintonian economics investment is always good, consumption is bad, and since all worthwhile investment emanates from government we merely need to shift funds from private to public hands. Productivity is the sole measure of success, so we must get more output out of fewer workers (with the help of a tax credit for replacing workers with robots), yet also rehire all the sweatshop workers displaced by the (unmentionable) big productivity improvements of 1981–92. Deficits are wonderful in the short run (apparently measured by one presidential term), but terrible after that.

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"Your honor, as a businessman my client is willing to admit that his motive was profit."

This last canon of Clintonomics has attained the status of a religious chant. It is that adding $30 to $60 billion to the deficit is a necessary "stimulus" in the short run, but must be combined with a "credible plan" to reduce the deficit in the distant future. Adding another $20 billion of pork each year through 1996 is somehow considered mere "short-term stimulus," having nothing to do with that incredible long-term plan. This long-term charade is supposedly essential to making bond traders happy (an old line, borrowed from David Stockman). But if interest rates depend on budget deficits, why have interest rates fallen so far as the deficit hit new highs? Actually, bond investors care a lot more about what the government is likely to do to their taxes than about adding a few more Treasury IOUs to the heap. Clinton's plan to tax interest income at higher rates is bound to raise the demand for tax-exempt bonds, thus raising interest rates on all taxable securities, mortgages, and loans.

Another defining element of the new orthodoxy is that it is virtually impossible to spend too much on federally financed highways, bridges, and the like. Felix Rohatyn said we need another $2 trillion for this sort of stuff. The Gore greens like fat highway bills too (though they would probably prefer to ban cars and trucks altogether). An even bigger gasoline tax (already more than doubled since 1982) could reconcile this conflict, providing money for highway building and at the same time discouraging anyone from using those roads. But the whole argument that federal "infrastructure" is somehow conducive to private production necessarily hinges on the notion that better roads could save time and thus lower transportation costs. Higher fuel taxes, though, certainly do not lower transportation costs, as any trucker will be happy to explain. In any case, Clinton eschewed any plan of raising gas taxes, unless combined with middle-class tax relief, implying the latter was just a campaign prank.

As Clinton's "stimulus package" simply stimulates borrowing, while shifting savings into municipal bonds and inflation hedges, the Federal Reserve will have no prudent choice but to lift the interest rates on bank reserves too. But the President-elect said he would oppose such a move unless there was "clear evidence" of accelerating inflation. The trouble is that no evidence of inflation is ever clear enough for politicians until it is too late. Just recall the pattern of denial as White House officials made excuses for the rapidly brewing inflation in 1973, and again in 1979.

The President-elect was on firmer ground when he moved from money to credit. He mentioned regulatory constraints on bank credit as a major problem for small businesses. The only problem here is that his "experts" made it sound as though this was sheer meanness on the part of regulators, rather than explicit rules. The Basle capital standards make banks put up 8 per cent capital for business loans and zero for Treasury bonds, so the banks cut back on the former and expanded the latter. This would be

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easy to fix, but not if Mr. Clinton continues to listen only to the same old crew of politically correct yes-persons.

In September 1974, nine months into a recession, President Ford assembled a group of economic experts who decided that the economy was overheated and needed punitive surtaxes on success. In December 1992, twenty months after a recession ended, President-elect Clinton assembled a group of economic experts who decided that the economy was overcooled and needed punitive surtaxes on success. The only progress in all that time is that we have saved money this go-around by not issuing "WIN" buttons. □

A New Political Landscape

BREAKING RANKS

Did the split among the neo-cons cost George Bush the election? And just who *are* the neo-cons?

ELLIOTT ABRAMS

THE Republican loss in November brings to mind the old adage that victory has many fathers, but defeat is an orphan. In this case, it would be more apt to say that defeat is an illegitimate child: no one will accept responsibility, though many are ready to accuse others.

There are a number of candidates for the honor, starting with Mr. Bush and his team. Their frequent abandonment of conservative principles, and their general incompetence during the campaign, forced many components of the "Reagan coalition" to confront a difficult choice. Stick with Bush because the Democrats were even worse, or jump ship?

Polling evidence demonstrates that the most faithful group for Mr. Bush was the Christian Right, whereas the first to jump ship were members of the Old Right, including two who ran against the President: Pat Buchanan in the primaries and Howard Phillips in the general election (in those states where he could get on the ballot).

Where did neoconservatives fit in this spectrum? Nearer the Christian Right than the paleo-cons, it seems. While this magazine urged a tactical vote for Mr. Buchanan in the New Hampshire primary, neo-cons from Irving Kristol to Michael Novak, from Jeane Kirkpatrick to Midge Decter, from Norman Podhoretz to Richard John Neuhaus, urged staying with President Bush.

But a few neo-cons backed Clinton very publicly, signing a newspaper advertisement for him, writing articles on his behalf, and advising his campaign. The best known of these were: Richard Schifter, a lawyer who had served with distinction as Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights from 1985 to 1992; Joshua Muravchik of the American Enterprise Institute, author of *Exporting Democracy: Fulfilling America's Destiny*; and Penn Kemble of Freedom House.

What ties these men together is their tendency to give human-rights policy primacy in American foreign policy. They are accurately described as Wilsonians or interventionists, who believe that the expansion of democracy is not only a moral good but a practical goal for the United States. By contrast, neo-cons like Irving Kristol place great emphasis on the careful delineation of American national interests. They take a much more skeptical view of the ability of the United States to spread democracy and of very many countries to sustain it.

It is not surprising that this split was reflected in the presidential campaign, for Clinton espoused a much more activist view than did Bush. It is widely believed that one reason Schifter quit his job and endorsed Clinton was that the Democrat had urged stronger protests against the human-rights abuses of the Chinese Communist government, while the Bush Administration's *Realpolitik* required near silence on those abuses, even after Tiananmen Square.

Human-rights policy, however, is only one issue that separated the Clinton backers from their friends; foreign policy in general was another. Perhaps encouraged by the warm welcome they received from the Clinton campaign (and, in Schifter's case, association with Clinton himself going back to the mid 1980s), the three came to believe that a Clinton Administration would not be Carter II. They suggested that Clinton's leading role in the Democratic Leadership Council showed his true feelings, which were hardly McGovernite. Most neo-cons, by contrast, remained deeply skeptical. Clinton, they pointed out, had little or no foreign-policy experience. He would be surrounded by "experts" whose views had helped drive many neo-cons out of the Democratic Party in the late 1970s. And he would face a Democratic Congress that had fought Reagan's policy at every turn. Since the weight of opinion in the Democratic Party remained well to the Left, familiar names from the bad old days would soon crop up.

The pro-Clinton neo-cons did not debate this. Instead, they argued that a Clinton Administration would be a battleground between Clinton's moderate inclinations and more radical forces in his party, and they wanted to get into that fight. The price of admission was an endorsement of Clinton. This was a powerful argument as far as it went, but it required an optimism about the Democrats that most neo-cons did not share.

The Home Front

IT ALSO required a dismissal of the importance of domestic policy. Most neo-cons, like most other conservatives, were unhappy with the President's failure to unseat Saddam Hussein, his support of Gorbachev against Yeltsin, his lack of enthusiasm for breaking up the Soviet empire, and his sometimes bitter criticisms of Israel. But if these reproaches were counterbalanced by doubts about a

Mr. Abrams, whose Undue Process *is just out from Free Press, is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute.*

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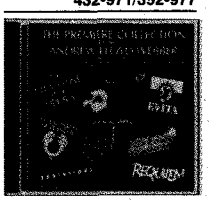

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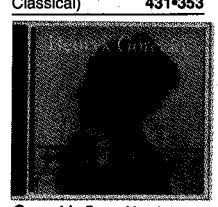

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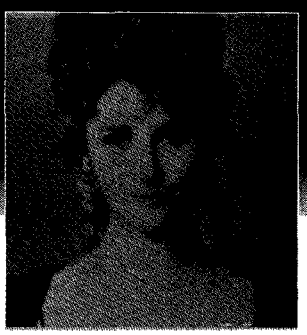

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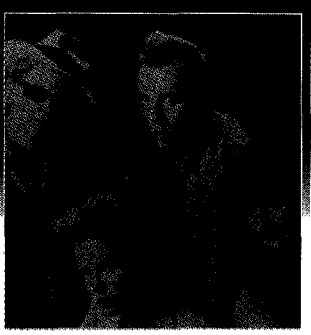

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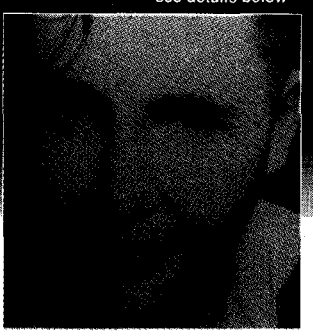

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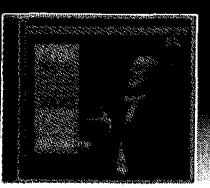

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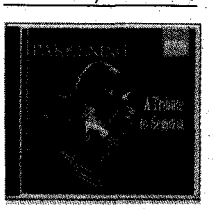

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Clinton foreign policy, they were altogether outweighed by a certainty that Clinton domestic policy would turn sharply left.

And here is perhaps the sharpest division between the Clinton backers and most neo-cons. Those who supported Clinton have never shown much interest in the domestic-policy issues that move most conservatives, from economic regulation, antitrust policy, and free markets, to "gay rights," restrictions on "abortion rights," judicial appointments like Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas, and school choice. If they have strongly opposed racial quotas in employment in the past, they must have swallowed their views under the theory that no candidate is perfect.

On domestic policy, then, most neo-cons are plain vanilla conservatives, while those who broke away to support Clinton are not. They are not, in fact, conservatives at all, but Scoop Jackson or George Meany Democrats, whose principled hostility to Communism led them to back Republicans in 1980, 1984, and 1988. With Communism vanquished, there is really no reason for them to stay with the GOP.

Now, a Jackson/Meany Democrat is no Republican, but he is no McGovernite either. He is likely to be a moderate on social issues. Economic issues are more confusing, for Jackson and Meany were big-government men all the way, "Great Society" enthusiasts whose favorite President was Lyndon Johnson. But that was almost thirty years ago, and Bill Clinton himself is more restrained about government than Democrats back then. Nonetheless, the economic views of his neo-con supporters may still be close to those of the AFL-CIO. This means a grudging concession that the free market works, together with endless efforts to limit its functioning. At any rate, unlike most neoconservatives, those backing Bill Clinton are not troubled by how he is likely to handle the economy.

Rather than a split among the neos, then, what we are seeing is a shakeout that separated the neo-conservatives from their Democratic fellow-travelers. These moderate Democrats had deserted their party when it deserted the struggle against Communism, and made common cause with Republicans to win the cold war. They have returned to their party now, to fight within it for their foreign-policy views. We should wish them luck. Their faith in the victory of moderation in the Democratic Party is, as Dr. Johnson said of second marriages, the triumph of hope over experience.

As for the neo-cons, they remain mainstream conservatives on foreign and domestic policy, a truth that will be usefully clarified by the departure from their ranks of Democrats who never really "crossed the floor." □

Into the Twenty-First Century

THE COMPETITIVENESS ILLUSION

Does our country need to be literate in order to be competitive? If not, why read?

PETER SHAW

THE universally acknowledged decline in American education is said to have given rise to a debate over how to improve the schools. Yet virtually all those active in the so-called debate are in firm agreement on both the nature of the crisis and what should be done about it. The problem, it is agreed, is that America stands in danger of not being able to compete in the highly technologized twenty-first-century world. The solution, it is also agreed, is educational reform emphasizing skills like computer literacy.

Under the heading of "training," this approach has come to dominate the educational thinking of the incoming Clinton Administration. Labor Secretary designee Robert Reich is identified with training, and he is confident that the education establishment can produce internationally competitive workers. That establishment's approach, though, no matter how dressed up to sound forward-looking, dynamic, and innovative, only repeats the same orthodoxy that brought about the crisis in the first place.

The twenty-first-century competitiveness argument is at once a measure of the cultural impoverishment of the education establishment and a sure indicator of its determination to keep in place the most deleterious educational practices of the recent past. In saying nothing about the civilizing mission of education this establishment exposes the poverty of its approach. And in barely mentioning reading, writing, and arithmetic, it ensures that American children will continue to lack what they and their society truly need. One is tempted nevertheless to endorse any argument, even a crudely utilitarian one, if it promises to direct resources to education. But the distortions inherent in the false pragmatism of most educational reform promise to continue eroding, rather than to improve, education.

The technological society does not particularly depend on education. A glance at the record shows us that the rapid growth of the United States into the world's greatest industrial power coincided with a steady drop in reading levels running from 1930 to the present. Regna Lee Wood, a teacher, pointed out in an article in *NR* [Sept. 14] that this falling off was followed by a related, long decline in SAT scores beginning in 1941.

Technological society turns out to work in the opposite way from that usually supposed: namely by actually requiring less rather than more education of its workers. This is because

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modern industry depends on reducing human error, which means reducing dependence on the individual worker's expertise and judgment. In building or maintaining electronic devices, workers who once installed or rewired electrical circuits now plug in modular components consisting of machine-printed circuit boards.

Office workers now routinely service office machines like copiers simply by inserting and removing self-contained cartridges. When other parts of the machines malfunction, signal lights instruct the user to "replace paper" or to remove paper caught at a specified point inside the works. Facsimile machines print out both an explanation and a cure for failed transmissions. Problems not explained by the machines themselves can still be corrected without summoning a technician by phoning so-called help lines.

Devices that require professional maintenance and repairs of course continue to exist. But as they grow more complex, service personnel are called upon to master ever smaller portions of the whole. Engines still require mechanics. But like the general practitioner in medicine, the auto or truck mechanic has had a number of his functions taken over by specialists—in muffler replacement, tires, tune-up and oil changing, rust proofing, wheel balancing, transmissions. In what remains of his own realm, the mechanic no longer disassembles and repairs engine parts. He replaces an entire master brake cylinder, carburetor, water pump, or motor running the windshield wipers, seats, or other internal moving parts of a car.

Advancing technology means that complexity is accompanied by simplification. Truck loading and routing become more complex as these processes are analyzed, computerized, and conducted in ever more efficient ways. But on the loading docks workers using hand-held computers make fewer decisions than in the past. Nor do they need computer literacy. They need only the ability to recognize numbers. And in most cases the passing of the computer's electric eye over a bar code renders even number recognition unnecessary.

An article in the *Wall Street Journal* titled "Computer Use by Illiterates Grows at Work," reveals that, "In some warehouses, fork-lift drivers who can't read the labels on a soda machine get directions from talking computers on their belts. . . . Instead of writing up work reports, construction workers can touch pictures on a portable pen-based computer screen to store records." The computers worn by these workers, like the printed circuits being plugged in by auto and television repairmen, are manufactured by still less skilled workers, many of them women just off the farms in South Korea or Mexico. More advanced products are fabricated by workers who need literacy and skill levels only very little higher: "with the touch-screen system that displays cylinders, slots, and cones, the machinist can place a measuring probe next to the part and touch the axis to be measured. The computer then figures out whether the part meets specifications."

The future role of literacy in the workplace has been succinctly stated by Pierre Dogan, the president of Granite Communications, a company that is now "developing software for hotel housekeeping." It seems that "so long as maids can read room numbers, they will be able to check off tasks completed or order supplies by simply touching pictures on the screen." Dogan points out that "you can create a work program with prompting, including iconic messages." In fact, he logically concludes, "you can use an illiterate work force."

Do We Need Education?

EVEN AS computers are rendering literacy unnecessary for a large number of jobs, the education establishment remains convinced that society is moving toward a need for increasing rather than decreasing skills at the lower levels. In classic bureaucratic fashion, it sustains its self-regard by initiating apparently forward-looking initiatives but succeeds only in neglecting its fundamental responsibilities. The truly forward-looking question to ask about education is not what it can do for competitiveness in the twenty-first century, but why we should have education at all when it is not truly needed by a technological society.

The answer might seem to be that education is needed to turn out the experts who can develop computers for hotel maids and aerospace-parts assemblers. Yet the same decline in good teaching that has affected the unskilled has accompanied the flowering of inventiveness that has marked the computer age. Somehow, again despite the shortcomings of education, enough people of high accomplishment have emerged to run a technological society and supply personnel for the learned professions. Just as advanced technology requires less expertise at the lower levels, it requires fewer innovators at the top. The output of both groups is enhanced by the power of the machines and systems they work with.

The Unsuppressibles

IF AMERICAN education is as poor as everyone agrees it is, though, how did the experts who have overcome the deficiency emerge? The answer is that these people represent the intelligence and talent that education cannot suppress no matter how ineffective it becomes. For the most part, the so-called improvements in education introduced under the banners first of reform and, more recently, of twenty-first-century competitiveness have been irrelevant. Special classes, psychological sensitivity, reduced class size, audio-visual equipment, cultural-enrichment outings, attention to the values of other cultures, AIDS awareness, new math, "look-say" reading instruction—all of these and more have neither raised the level of underperforming students nor prevented the brighter ones from advancing.

The latter students educate themselves by effectively bypassing their formal education. Their chief resource is family support, much heralded but actually little appreciated as an alternative education system. This support extends from children being read to as toddlers, to their being encouraged to read on their own (something for which there is more time in a degraded education system that makes few demands on student time), to their being provided with tutors and after-school private instruction in music and other arts.

A second alternative to formal education is television. It offers elementary instruction in the subjects that have been neglected or dropped in favor of the special programs preferred by the education establishment. From television one can learn geography and meteorology (on news programs), biology and geology (from na-

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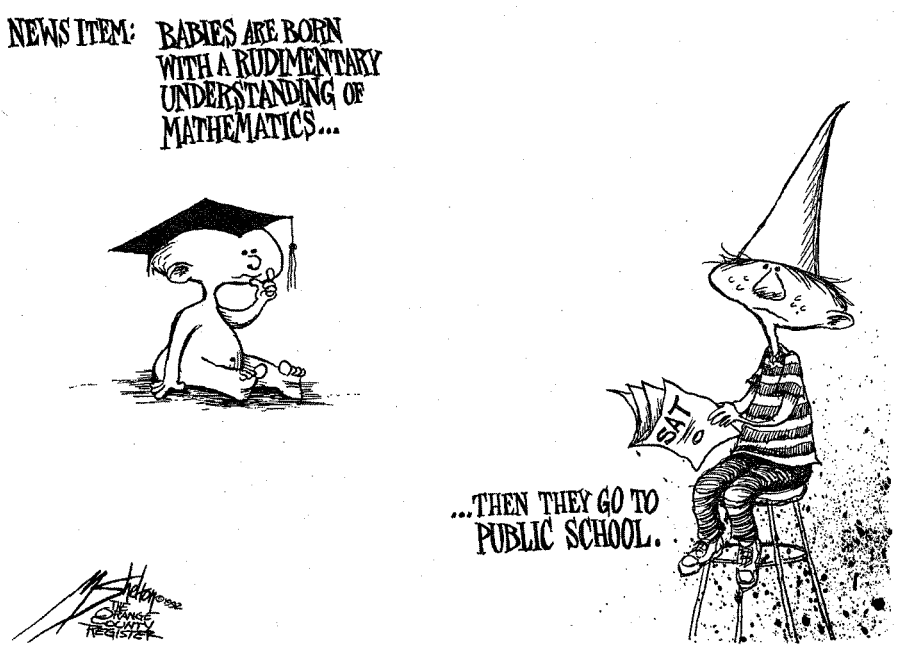
ture documentaries), and literature (from broadcasts of classic plays and old movie adaptations), as well as be introduced to opera, the ballet, and symphonic and chamber music. The absence of most of these from current teaching becomes an advantage, since when taught they are usually politicized in the manner of the multicultural subjects that have largely replaced them. Not surprisingly, educators frown on television, and nearly every voice in the education debate unites in identifying television and not the schools as the leading cause of educational decline.

The third alternative is association with other bright students. New York City's Stuyvesant High School has turned out the highest-scoring students in the country throughout this century. Until 1992, for at least forty years its students were crowded into an obsolete building with inadequate laboratory, library, and recreational facilities. Classes were crowded; they typically held sixty students each. Textbooks were out of date and in short supply. Teachers had to use whatever title was in stock, and not infrequently were obliged to issue two texts to the same class (and hence two separate homework and writing assignments). Computers were obsolete or broken.

Stuyvesant High School's teaching staff was not specially selected but came from the same citywide pool that staffed all other public high schools. The students, though, were those who scored highest on a citywide entrance examination (except for some 10 to 14 per cent of special admissions in recent years). In the most populous city in the nation such a competitive examination consistently produces the nation's most intelligent single concentration of students, and in the end the highest academic achievement. That mediocre instruction and inferior facilities hardly alter this outcome demonstrates that the caliber of students counts for more than anything else in education. (Small communities, unfortunately, are not easily able to produce such concentrations of talent, so that this third alternative to the inferiority of the schools is less available to them.)

Bright students, furthermore, are more intelligent than most of their instructors. This means that they can filter out the educationist babble about the equality of all cultures, society's responsibility for unsocial acts by individuals, and political radicalism as the source of social progress. Bright students are also more intelligent than other students, though this is no longer sayable. Where once the bright student stood out—even if invidiously identified as an egghead or "four eyes"—he has become less visible, thanks to the determined leveling of distinctions by educational leaders, except in special schools like Stuyvesant. Nearly all students are now awarded high grades. Singled out for special attention are the least rather than the most gifted. The shift in emphasis is well expressed by the change in the meaning of the word "special" in education from signifying those best able to learn to those least able. Predictably, when Stuyvesant High School finally received special attention in the form of a new building, there was an angry outcry at this act of "elitism."

The educationists, then, cannot prevent the emergence of an elite. At the other extreme, their efforts will continue to be directed toward the least promising students, who will continue to enter the work force with ever diminishing levels of literacy. In the meantime, society will continue to compensate for the deficits of poorly educated students through technological advances provided by the self-taught elite.



Give Literacy a Try

OF COURSE it would be far better to have a workforce and citizenry literate and sophisticated, capable of making decisions and innovating. The successes of technology are a recourse, not something desirable in themselves. But to suggest an alternative approach in the presence of an educationist—for example, that students should be able to add up columns of figures, locate the major countries of the world on a map, parse a sentence, display comprehension of a paragraph of English prose, and know the leading events of world and national history—is to stir up dire warnings about the soul-destroying effects of "rote learning." What educationists really mean when they invoke this phrase is that they experience teaching the basics as a form of drudgery for themselves. Far more pleasant is it to take their students on an outing, show a video, set them to making mobiles expressing the concept of an inter-related world, or discuss the environment, AIDS, world peace, or the student's personal feelings and aspirations.

In practice, interestingly enough, these diversions have proved to engage student interest far less than learning dates and places and grammar ever did. But more importantly, diversion from the basics has made the remainder of life less interesting as well. Workers in factories lack not the specific skills to do their jobs, but rather the ability to analyze their

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places in the larger scheme of things in their industry, region, country, and historical period. To gain such awareness it is necessary to be a reader and to have developed such habits—by rote, where necessary—as rhetorical analysis, which can help one to understand a variety of phenomena from industrial systems to the exhortations of politicians. What the educationists direly and exaggeratedly denominate rote learning is actually the basis for escaping from the unexamined life that Socrates called a life not worth living.

Indeed, much-maligned rote learning is the best basis for deriving the civilized outlook that formal education has become incapable of fostering. Education concerned chiefly with competitiveness degenerates into the vacuities of "enrichment" programs—global awareness, undifferentiated deference toward other cultures, and the like. But education concerned with the basics produces citizens capable of thinking on their own. Elites can continue becoming computer geniuses, but society owes it to them and to itself to make it possible for them to become civilized computer geniuses. To aim education at twenty-first-century competition is to perpetuate the failures of the current education crisis; to aim education at civilizing students through imparting basic skills and knowledge would be to achieve both competitiveness and a civilized polity.

In educationese—where special means ordinary, excellence means mediocrity, and enrichment means deprivation of knowledge—reform in the name of twenty-first-century competitiveness means continued erosion of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Those condemned to pass through a system with these distorted values will continue making do on their own. But it would be interesting to see what they might make of themselves if, for a change, their education supplied them with the proper tools. □

Elysian Dialogue

FREEDOM AND NATIONHOOD

Two dead white European males shed light on the current messes in India and what was once Yugoslavia.

MAURICE CRANSTON

Lord Acton and John Stuart Mill were two great exponents of the idea of freedom in Victorian England, Acton from the perspective of a conservative liberal, Mill as a romantic radical. Nationalism was one subject on which they disagreed. Here they are imagined re-appraising their views in the light of today's experience.

ACTON: In 1861 you argued, Mr. Mill, in favor of Nationalism. Do not events of the twentieth century prompt you to change your mind?

MILL: I said that where there was a sentiment of nationality in a certain people, there was a case for uniting them under the same government and a government to themselves apart. I see no reason to alter that opinion. Indeed, since then it appears to have become almost universally shared.

ACTON: But do you not see how Nationalism has provoked one war after another in the years since you wrote—international wars influenced by nationalist passions; civil wars of the kind in progress today in Yugoslavia; and totalitarian tyrannies such as Nazism and Fascism, which are simply Nationalisms carried to extremes?

MILL: I did not favor any and every movement which called itself Nationalist. All I said in the book called *Representative Government* was that the question of government should be decided by the governed.

ACTON: But you expressed your approval of the idea of the separation of peoples, their division into independent, autonomous states. And this, which is the whole essence of the Nationalist ideology, has proved a ruinous program.

MILL: I do not think it is felt to be ruinous by the people of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, for example, whose first thought throughout the decades of Soviet domination was to recover their independence. Or by those of Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia, and Moldavia, which had never had much experience of independence, but seized it as soon as the opportunity arose.

ACTON: The cases you mention are not all alike. In Moldavia, for example, the population is mixed, and when the Rumanian-speaking majority proclaimed a Moldavian republic, the Russian-speaking minority proclaimed a Dnestr republic: the one confronting the other. Their situation is by no means unique, because peoples do not live in isolated territories. In the architecture of that city which has been the scene of the most recent tragic consequences of Nationalism—Sarajevo—we see a skyline in which Catholic spires, Orthodox domes, and Moslem minarets are intermingled. They date from the old Austrian Empire, when different religious communities and racial groups lived peaceably with their neighbors.

MILL: Only because they were united as victims of the same imperial despotism.

ACTON: That may well have been the case when Yugoslavia was united under Communism. But the Austrian Empire did not rule by terror, and neither did the British Empire.

MILL: But if the people feel they are being oppressed, they have the right to end their obedience.

ACTON: I have never denied that there are such cases. But far more often, people have been persuaded by Nationalist propaganda that whether they are oppressed or not, they ought to have their own national state.

Mr. Cranston is the author of, among other works, Political Dialogues.

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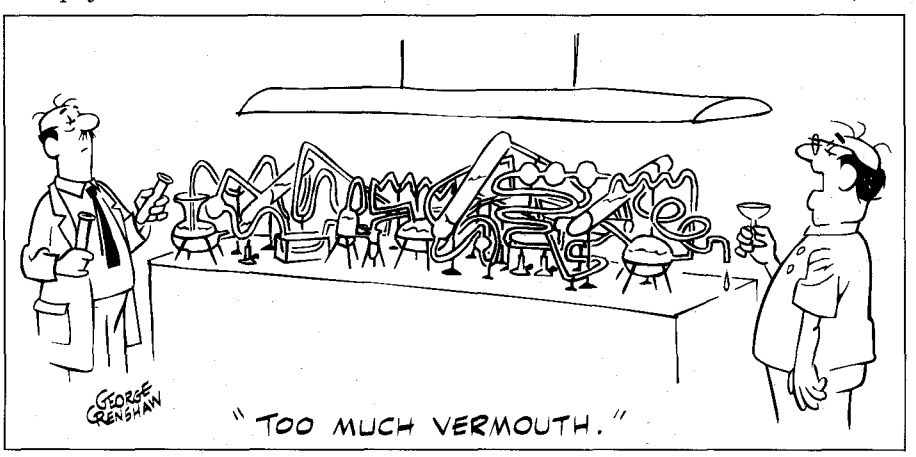
MILL: That is how they understand their freedom.

ACTON: It is a wrong understanding of freedom, even by the standards of your own theory, which defines liberty as the realization of each individual's best self. The founders of Nationalism in Germany in our lifetime—Fichte and his followers—claimed that the freedom of every German-speaking person could only be realized in the freedom of a united independent German state: and the rights of individual Germans to life, liberty, and property came to be absorbed into the collective right of the German nation. Personal freedom was lost in the search for national freedom.

MILL: I am no champion of German metaphysics. But German Nationalism can be dated from the conquest of the German-speaking states by Napoleon; and although Napoleon proclaimed the object of his empire to be the transmission of liberty to all peoples, the Germans saw him as an alien despot, and they realized that their division into some three hundred separate states was a fatal weakness.



ACTON: It could perhaps be said that both German and Italian Nationalism—the two most important forms it took in our lifetime—were constructive enterprises putting small states together into large ones. In the twentieth-century, Nationalism has been almost wholly concerned with breaking large states into smaller pieces: we have seen empires, kingdoms, and large republics which were composed of varied communities dissolve in pursuit of the goal of one community, one state.

MILL: Nationalism does not demand autonomy for every community, but only for every nation. I myself wrote in *Representative Government* that the Bretons or the Basques would be foolish to cut themselves off from the current of the ideas and feelings of a highly civilized and cultivated people, which they enjoyed with membership in the French nationality. I said the same about the Welsh and the Scottish Highlanders, and their membership of the British nation.

ACTON: Nationalists of today would consider your reservations outdated. They say that the Welsh people and the Scottish people are nations. Nationalists have each his own idea of what the word "nation" means.

MILL: In the eighteenth century it was said that a nation was a group united by a common culture and language and perhaps religion.

ACTON: But we have also seen that definition denied. Ernest Renan, for example, said that a nation was simply a group of people united by shared memories and by a will to remain united—a "plebiscite renewed every day."

MILL: Other theorists speak of race or what is today thought more decent to speak of as ethnicity. The nation is said to be composed of people of shared ethnic origins. That has obviously become a very influential conception of the nation.

ACTON: It is just that conception of the nation as a racial or an ethnic group which has put so much venom into Nationalism. We see Moslems being driven out of Bosnia because they are ethnically different from Serbs, and therefore treated as an alien nation. Jews and Armenians, because they are ethnically different from their neighbors, have been victims of genocide.

MILL: But these must be seen as exceptional cases in the general movement of the world toward what Woodrow Wilson called self-determination. The withdrawal of the United States from the British Empire and its establishment of an autonomous republic provided the model which dozens of other peoples have followed with a fair measure of success.

ACTON: The people of the United States did not repudiate British rule because they considered it alien rule; they did so because it had become an unjust and oppressive rule. The same motive prompted Germans and other peoples in Europe to resist, as you observed, Napoleon's rule. The objection to Napoleon was not that he was French, but that he was a tyrant. It was Nationalist propaganda which persuaded people to resist a ruler on the grounds of his nationality alone. Kings of foreign birth were often indeed preferred in the past because they were felt to be more impartial in adjudicating the claims of their subjects.

MILL: I believe the British government in India was favored there for much the same reason. But the time comes when a people, or a nation, desires to rule itself, as Jefferson explained in the Declaration of Independence. Paternalistic government can well be exercised by a foreigner, but representative government must be exercised by men who have as much as possible in common with the people they represent.

ACTON: You use the words "people" and "nation" as if they were interchangeable. For me the word "nation" has meaning only in relation to a people which is united politically, and constitutes what Rousseau called a *patrie*, commanding the patriotism of its members. We could rightly speak of Poland as a nation, even at a time when it had no place on the map of Europe after neighboring princes had divided its territories as the spoils of war. There was a Polish nation because there had once been a Polish kingdom, and when the kings were driven out, the Polish nation remained, like a soul without a body, yearning for reunion.

MILL: Evidently, Lord Acton, you favor Polish Nationalism. Why can you not extend the same sympathy to the Nationalism of other countries? Could not an Italian Nationalist, for example, have said before 1860 that the Italian nation was a soul without a body, yearning for reunion?

ACTON: Mazzini undoubtedly said such things, sitting in exile in France.

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But when he went to Italy in 1847 and told the Italian people they were "penetrated with the idea of unity and nationality," they did not know what he was talking about. They had had no experience, as the Poles had had, of patriotic association. Italy came to be unified as a result of the King of Sardinia acquiring by force and fraud dominion of the whole peninsula. Only after that could Italian patriotism be born and an Italian nation be created.

MILL: At least you must admit that Italian people acquired more liberty in the unified kingdom of Italy than some of them had experienced under the Bourbon monarchs of Naples or the Austrian viceroys of Lombardy.

ACTON: They certainly did not in the epoch of Mussolini, who was the most zealous of Italian Nationalists.

MILL: Mussolini exercised power for only 20 years of the 130 during which Italy has been united and independent. Fascism was a reaction against democracy, and in the end, democracy has triumphed in most cases over reaction.

ACTON: In most cases? It appears to me that in most cases, communities which have obtained national independence have merely exchanged an alien rule, which may or may not have been benevolent, for some form of indigenous despotism. The rule of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East was often corrupt, but it was usually too slack to be oppressive, and the ordinary Arabs had more freedom under the Turks than they have today under Saddam Hussein and other such despotic Nationalists.

MILL: As you know, I myself always justified the British government of India in my lifetime because the Indian people had not achieved political maturity. Our administration provided them with the education they needed to achieve their national independence, and by the 1940s they were ready for it.

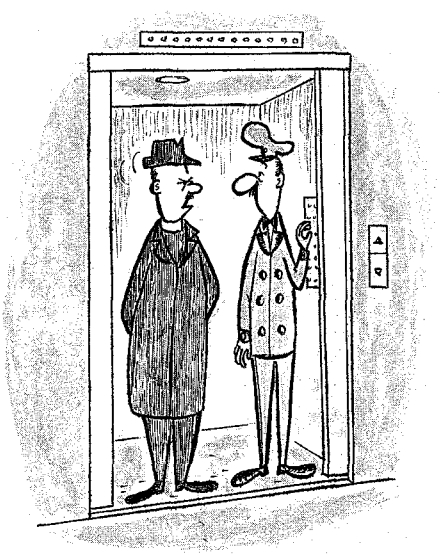
ACTON: If the design was to create an Indian nation, it failed; for as soon as imperial rule ended, the Moslem minority seceded amid scenes of violence from India to establish Pakistan, and then the eastern provinces seceded from Pakistan to establish Bangladesh, and now we see the Sikh community demanding a state of its own. Indian Nationalism existed only as long as British rule prevailed; since then the Indian subcontinent has been the field of competing and conflicting Nationalisms.

MILL: Different religious communities in the Indian subcontinent have formed themselves into separate civil societies or states in which each member can feel that he is ruled by persons of his own kind, and the frontiers of the state correspond to the borders of the country which people of the same nationality inhabit. This answers a reasonable demand of a democratic age, even if the regimes concerned fall short of the ideas of democracy.

ACTON: You suggest that the Pakistani would prefer the misrule of a Moslem to the just rule of a Hindu.

MILL: Evidently, if that is the choice.

ACTON: Then the mind of the Pakistani in question must be distorted by



"Up—of course!"

the ideology of Nationalism, for it is not reasonable to prefer misrule to just rule.

MILL: The man in question does not believe he is making that choice, although I have heard more than one Irishman say he would rather live under a bad government in Dublin than a good government in London.

ACTON: The Irishman can say that because he believes that no government in London could ever be really good for Ireland. The Irish have endured too many centuries of oppression from English rulers. In a way, they are like the Poles. They once had their own kings and a culture older than that of England. At the time when the Scots finally merged their kingdom, and the Welsh their principality, with the English in the United Kingdom, Catholic Ireland did not do so, and the United Kingdom could only command the patriotism of the Protestant minority in Ireland reinforced by confiscation of land and the immigration of Presbyterians from Scotland.

MILL: I always hoped that the government in London would have introduced enough reforms to reconcile the Catholic population of Ireland to membership in the United Kingdom.

ACTON: The alternative, which the Liberal Party proposed in the nineteenth century, was Home Rule. In the event neither policy was adopted; instead a coalition government after World War I imposed Partition, which separated counties but did not separate peoples; so that we observe in Northern Ireland today a majority declaring itself part of the British nation and a large minority declaring itself part of the Irish nation, each hostile toward the other; and terrorism has become a part of daily life.

MILL: Since the one party is unwilling to be British and the other unwilling to be Irish, the only solution must be compromise and reconciliation.

ACTON: Unfortunately, the rise of Nationalism in the past two hundred years is just what has made reconciliation difficult, not only in Northern Ireland, but almost everywhere that populations with different religions, different cultures, different languages are intermingled. Progressive opinion welcomes what it now calls "multiculturalism"—but the fact is that multiculturalism does not flourish under progressive forms of government, such as that of a republic, where the people are expected to share their sovereignty with their neighbors. Under the sovereignty of a king, or an emperor, all manner of races and creeds could live peaceably side by side, united in their allegiance to that monarch, and secure in the peace he imposed.

MILL: In that case, we have to ask whether freedom is not worth more than peace. I agree that the pursuit of national self-determination may generate something like civil war in places where neighboring or intermingled communities fear, mistrust, or detest each other; but such circumstances are not as common or widespread as you believe, and, more often than not, nations have been able to achieve both autonomy and civil tranquilty.

(Continues on page 61)

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Invisible Men

PETER BRIMELOW

"WAS THE MUGGER black?" asked my wife sympathetically. As a Canadian newly arrived in Manhattan, she honestly didn't know that you must never ask. Her hostess, caught off balance in mid crime story, admitted that he was. Then she hurriedly covered herself: of course, she said, this meant nothing.

Besides being a Canadian, however, my wife was and still is in some respects invincibly innocent. And now she was really puzzled. "But aren't most muggers in New York black?" she inquired. Her hostess was outraged. "*I don't believe that*," she snapped.

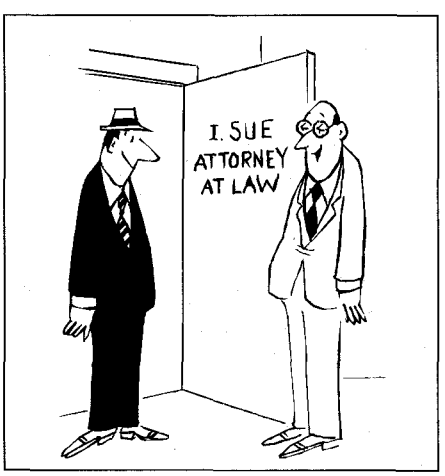
The single greatest strength of Jared Taylor's *Paved with Good Intentions* is its massive and merciless crushing of this type of hysterical denial, which currently paralyzes all discussion of race relations in America. Considered entirely by itself, this achievement makes his book the most important to be published on the subject for many years. In this area, experience shows that it is not enough to be mugged by reality. Footnotes are apparently necessary as well. And Taylor provides 1,339 of them, quarried from a remarkably wide reading of contemporary sources.

Paved with Good Intentions: The Failure of Race Relations in Contemporary America, by Jared Taylor (Carroll & Graf, 416 pp., $22.95)

Thus it is indeed true that blacks commit most of New York's violent crime. Even a decade before my wife arrived in Manhattan, by the early 1970s, blacks already made up over 60 per cent of those arrested for violent crime, but only 20 per cent of the city's population. And more recently, for example, black men have been responsible for over 85 per cent of the felonies committed against New York City cabbies, as many as 17 of whom are murdered each year. Nationwide, blacks—although only 12 per cent of the population—account for 64 per cent of all violent-crime arrests and 71 per cent of all robbery arrests.

Mr. Brimelow is a senior editor at Forbes.

But isn't this because the police are racist? Apparently not. Taylor hunts down and extirpates all such infinitely regressing excuses, which have for too long substituted for thought in American political discourse. In this case, for example, he proves via a closely reasoned analysis, based on witness reports and arrest patterns for burglaries, traffic violations, and drunkenness, that policemen of all races are, if anything, more lenient with criminals of a different race from themselves. (Which, of course, is just what you would expect, given current political pressures.)



"From the day I was born my parents planned on my becoming a lawyer."

Nor is the disparity caused by middle-class law enforcers over-concentrating on street crime. In 1990, blacks were nearly three times as likely as whites to be arrested for white-collar crimes such as forgery, counterfeiting, and embezzlement. And, finally and conclusively, blacks themselves are responsible for 73 per cent of all justified, self-defense killings. The vast majority of the people they kill are other blacks.

A fascinating Orwellian double-think enabled my wife's hostess to evade this reality—although in her conduct she certainly took account of it every day on Manhattan's streets. But this double-think is no mere harmless self-delusion. As in *1984*, it requires the constant support of an extraordinary censorship and self-censorship.

Media bias is a subject that easily becomes boring to sophisticates. But the inversions of truth here documented by Taylor are so extreme as to be pathological. Thus he is able to show that every one of the recent alleged white-racist atrocities—Howard Beach, Bensonhurst, Rodney King—had black-on-white analogies that went virtually unreported, although often far worse.

For example, Taylor tracks several years of self-feeding press references to the heinous scandal of a white Stanford student hanging a caricatured blackface Beethoven on the door of a black student (who, as it happens, had insisted Beethoven was black). An entire "campus racism" industry has been called into existence on the strength of such trivia. But who has heard of the four black University of Arizona football players, three of them on scholarships, whose hobby of beating up lone campus whites landed them in jail in 1989?

Or for that matter of the Miami-based Yahweh cult, whose leader was convicted in 1992 for causing his followers to kill numerous "white devils"—without benefit of even a fraction of the network prime time devoted to endless reruns of the (dishonestly edited) King-beating video.

This powerful combination of internal and external compulsion is literally able to turn black into white. Thus in 1987 Tawana Brawley, the black teenager who claimed she had been abducted by a white gang, was able, despite the increasing absurdity of her attorneys' allegations, to focus the attention of the entire country on the supposedly grave issue of white-on-black rape. But in fact it was a

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complete chimera. In 1988, there were fewer than ten cases of white-on-black rape—as opposed to 9,405 cases of black-on-white rape. Taylor reports that black men appear three to four times more likely to commit rape than whites, and more than sixty times more likely to rape a white than a white is likely to rape a black.

Taylor's storm of statistics puts in perspective the view that blacks themselves are the chief victims of black crime. That claim is almost true. In America, blacks account for just under half of murder victims. Any decent person will feel a particular sympathy for respectable black people who are likely to suffer the effects both of black crime and of white suspicion prompted by black crime. But their plight is merely one consequence—though a harsh one—of the crisis of black society. Homicide is now the leading cause of death for black men between 15 and 44; one in four black men in their twenties is either in jail, on probation, or on parole. Syphilis is fifty times more prevalent among blacks than among whites; black children are twice as likely as whites to die in their first year.

And this black crisis still disproportionately hurts whites. Black criminals choose white victims in more than half of their violent crime; the average black criminal seems over 12 times more likely to kill a white than vice versa.

The second major contribution of Taylor's book is its frontal assault on the universal assumption that "white racism" is to blame for everything. In effect, he proposes a logical-positivist's test: since this racism is (as he demonstrates) publicly illegal, privately undetectable in opinion polls, and does not seem materially to affect the economic status of blacks once that status is adjusted for education and other variables, in what sense does it exist?

Taylor documents in immense detail that the U.S., far from suppressing its blacks and poor, in fact subsidizes them, publicly and privately, including more than $2.5 trillion in federal moneys alone since the 1960s. This, notoriously, has done little good and much ill. But it is hardly the behavior of a racist society—unless liberal politicians, welfare bureaucrats, and academics have deliberately sought to destroy black society by spreading dependency and pauperism.

The truth may set us free. But it can also make us sick. Many people will unquestionably find Taylor's ruthless exposition of black failure more than they can stomach. One such is the Institute for Justice's Clint Bolick, who has written very sensibly about civil rights, but who recently reproached Taylor in the *Wall Street Journal* for dismissing "the continuing impact of racism, which most blacks face every day of their lives."

Grant that blacks suffer occasional slights, crude name-calling, and some discrimination. But how damaging are these compared to the self-inflicted wounds of black America? And what prompts this white behavior? Is endemic white racism any more reasonable an explanation for the situation than endemic black criminality and the defensive nervous hostility it produces among whites?

"Race is the great American dilemma," Taylor writes, echoing Gunnar Myrdal's famous survey, *An American Dilemma*. Nearly fifty years later, Myrdal's panacea of integration, equality, and confident social engineering has been followed by disaster. This news could not be more unwelcome. It is hardly surprising that both Left and Right prefer to cling to the myth of a culpable—but therefore at least in theory correctable—white racist America. □

I'm a Victim, You're a Victim

CHARLES R. KESLER

'WHINE on, harvest moon," as George Bush used to say in happier days, deriding Michael Dukakis during the 1988 campaign. Bush's put-down was whimsical—whether it expressed the lingering preppie mirth in his soul, or a strange sort of goofiness, was hard to say—but it poked fun at the liberal lamentations that had been issuing from the Democrats since the 1960s.

During his Presidency and his feckless re-election campaign, however, it was often Bush who seemed to be whining, almost absent-mindedly. It was as though he knew the conservative words, but couldn't get the liberal tune out of his mind. This was a shame, because at his best Bush reminds us not of "a kinder, gentler America" but of our sterner, nobler selves: the America that fought and won World War II. But what he called for during his Administration was a more "compassionate" America, and with Bill Clinton's election, he got it. When Clinton's effulgent compassion began to shine, Bush's thousand points of light disappeared like the night stars.

A Nation of Victims, by Charles J. Sykes (St. Martin's, 276 pp., $22.95)

Mr. Kesler is a professor of government at Claremont McKenna College.

The difference between genuine charity and the appeasement of interest groups was somehow lost in the recent campaign. How fortunate, then, that we have Charles Sykes's new book, which strives to reassert that distinction and to probe what he terms "the crisis of the American character." The author of two provocative volumes on the decay of American higher education (*ProfScam* and *The Hollow Men*), Sykes is well prepared to describe America's ongoing transformation into "a nation of victims," a nation conceived in resentment and dedicated to the proposition that "I am a victim. . . . I am not responsible; it's not my fault."

Now, any book on the burgeoning victimization industry runs a big risk, because the only thing worse than whining is—whining about whining. Sykes avoids this pitfall by frequent injections of good humor and common sense. He has an eye for the absurd, as in the University of Missouri School of Journalism handbook that proscribes words and phrases that tend to stereotype, like *gyp* ("offensive to Gypsies"), *burly* ("too often associated with large black men, implying ignorance"), and *qualified minority* ("because it implies some are not"). He knows better than to gild the lily, and lets examples speak for themselves: the lawyer who defends his client's tardiness at work by attributing it to "chronic lateness syndrome," or the Chicago man who

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threatens to sue McDonald's for violating federal equal-protection laws because his sixty-inch waist and prodigious butt would not fit into a restaurant seat.

But Sykes is not content to assemble anecdotes, and the major strength of his book is his intelligent review of the causes behind the crisis of American character. He begins his main account at mid century, invoking the trenchant (but now rather neglected) works of Robert Nisbet and David Riesman to describe a country newly affluent yet anxious. To cope with this diffuse, pervasive anxiety, Americans sought reassurance from worldly-wise professionals—thus begetting "the therapeutic culture," comprising psychotherapists, miscellaneous counselors, and the social scientists whose prescriptions would be followed in the Great Society. To his credit, Sykes does not leave it at this. He throws backward glances at the late-nineteenth-century epidemic of "neurasthenia," the first "collective attack of nerves" America suffered. And he even rummages around in the history of modern political philosophy to find the theoretical roots of our contemporary anxiety.

It is these sections that disappoint. Though Sykes is good at raising important questions, his answers are often slack. Is it democracy itself that breeds anxiety and restlessness? Tocqueville thought so, but his argument is never clearly stated or considered in Sykes's book. Or is it, instead, Rousseau and Romanticism that gave rise to the cult of victimhood? Hard to say: Rousseau only gets about two pages. Moreover, the *relative* influence of the many other thinkers mentioned in *A Nation of Victims*—e.g., Marx, Freud, Theodor Adorno, Charles Reich—is never clarified.

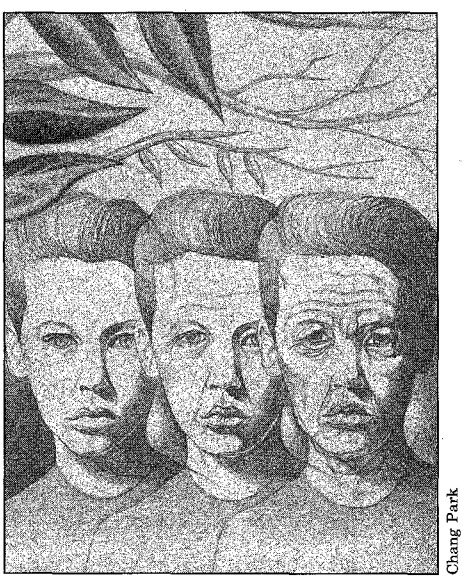
On a more practical level, Sykes has little to say about how American politics has contributed to the problem, e.g., whether welfare-state entitlements tend inevitably to reward and therefore encourage pretenders to victimhood. He well shows that by shifting the responsibility for most human problems to society, one invites irresponsibility, the abdication of individual self-government in favor of government as Big Mother. But by directing his major criticisms at culture and not (also) politics, he is guilty of a certain political irresponsibility, too.

Sykes's version of the "decay" in our national character would be more persuasive if he had first established what that character is at its best; but he provides no discussion of the archetypes of American character (Washington, Lincoln, Tom Sawyer, etc.). Accordingly, the book lacks the historical punch of Richard Brookhiser's *The Way of the WASP*, an elegant treatment of similar themes.

Still, *A Nation of Victims* makes up in delight and breadth what it lacks in depth. Charles Sykes has given us a timely warning of the consequences of Americans' turn from pride to pity as the principle of republican government, a warning all the more relevant after the recent election. Or as President Bush might put it, defiantly, "Don't cry for me, Argentina." □

The 'Pause that Refreshes

MAGGIE GALLAGHER



Chang Park

WHERE, o where has the promised land of liberation gone? Germaine Greer has, through twenty years and half a dozen books, wandered far and wide in search of the Holy Grail she outlined, so many years ago, in her international best-selling feminist classic, *The Female Eunuch*. Having thoroughly investigated the possibilities of copulation as a means of transcendence, discovered (too late) the lure of motherhood, and shared with us weepings of a Rachel who refuses to be comforted because her children will never be, Germaine Greer at last involuntarily set her sights on the undiscovered country, unknown and unlooked for among the frenzied couplings of youth: menopause.

The Change: Women, Aging, and the Menopause, by Germaine Greer (Knopf, 422 pp., $23.50)

Miss Gallagher is a senior fellow at the Center for Social Thought in New York. Her next book, The Abolition of Marriage, *is forthcoming from Poseidon Press.*

Miss Greer's book is just one of a spate of recent books by feminists about women and aging, and of those it is by far the most frustrating, convoluted, irrational, and fascinating.

Consistency has never been Miss Greer's strong suit. At each stage of the life cycle she has remained unabashedly preoccupied with her own problems. Once outraged by the unrelenting oppressive sexual attention of men, she now laments her own invisibility to the unfair sex. Then, she railed against the attempts of her elders to oppress the young by enculturating them with outmoded models and morals; now, she indignantly protests the flagrant disrespect of the young for the wisdom that years bring.

The same blithe desire to have it all ways is evident in her scathing denunciations of the male medical establishment, which according to Miss Greer both a) pays attention to menopause, therefore medicalizing it, and b) ignores menopause, therefore marginalizing it. Other reviewers have pointed out the oddity of Miss Greer's insistence both that most women do not suffer medical symptoms at menopause, and that it is a myth that "there are women who experience nothing significant at this time."

Part of the reason for the confusion is that Miss Greer is actually not very interested in menopause, medically defined as the cessation of ovulation. For her the "climacteric," as she prefers to call it, denotes not so much the end of fertility as the end of flirtation. The real change, according to Miss Greer, is social and sexual, not biological and reproductive: "Sooner or later

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the middle-aged woman becomes aware of a change in the attitude of other people toward her. She can no longer trade on her appearance, something which she has done unconsciously all her life."

Having spent thirty years celebrating the allure of the hunt, the joy of trading sexual favors and trading in sexual partners, former sexual revolutionaries such as Miss Greer are now discovering that as a formula for giving life meaning, sex games have, for women, at least one distinct drawback: after a certain age, nobody wants to play with you any more.

What happens when your sexual license expires? While successful, affluent men so inclined can continue to play the game, and continue to find eager young things to massage (among other things) their egos, women face a different, perhaps bleaker future.

"Now what do I do?" an unmarried middle-aged friend complained to Miss Greer over lunch. "Am I supposed to haunt the singles bars to try and pick up younger men? Am I supposed to descend lower and lower into squalor because I won't live without love? . . . Just thinking about it fills me with terrors. I lie awake at night, worrying."

"What actually happens to the aging woman during the climacteric is that men lose interest in manipulating her femaleness," Miss Greer writes. "They no longer sniff around her."

Older cultures, she says, understood that sex, like theoretical physics, is a young man's game, and after a time gave aging bodies permission to retire; in particular, Miss Greer believes traditional cultures give women permission to relinquish the "duty to attract," to exchange at an appropriate age the sexual power of youth for the spiritual power of the old. For happily married women, the loss of the power to attract the random sexual attention of strangers may be scarcely felt or noticed. But Miss Greer is surely right when she notes that the climacteric—morally, not medically, defined—cannot help being a troubling rite of passage for the large and increasing number of women who, because of divorce, widowhood, or failure to marry, face the prospect of entering old age alone.

Despite its many flaws, *The Change* contains jewels of unexpected (from this source) insight. Seldom has any writer penned a more incisive condemnation of orthodox feminism than this: "The modern woman has only two possible sources of satisfaction, her relationship with her husband and her relationship with her employer."

Nor can any critic of the sexual revolution fail to recognize the truth of Miss Greer's observation that: "The sexual revolutionaries' belief that sex was only destructive when distorted by repression has been shown to be wrong. . . . Nevertheless the belief in a domestic brand of sex, which is regular, benign, wholesome, and affectionate, has completely driven out any idea of love as essentially related to death."

Similarly, with a sympathy that bites, she writes of the pathetic behavior of feminists such as Simone de Beauvoir, who proved unable to accept age gracefully. When Claude Lanzmann asked Mme de Beauvoir, at age 44, to go out with him, "she was so pathetically grateful for this attention that she burst into tears."

In a sense *The Change* is a further exploration of the change of heart Miss Greer first hinted at in *Sex and Destiny*: "What is our civilization that we should so blithely propagate its discontents? . . . Why should we erect the model of recreational sex in the public places of all the world?"

Above all, *The Change* is an unlikely paean to the joys of old age, chief among them: escape from the tyranny of sex. Miss Greer longs to invite her cohorts to the time when the fire of the flesh has finally consumed itself. It is a consummation that, judging from *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, few Americans find devoutly to be wished. Nonetheless it is a position with a long tradition behind it, and Miss Greer's own personal pilgrimage from body to soul may be read with surprising pleasure. □

The Noble White Man

FLORENCE KING

THE INCREDULOUS, accusatory question, "You don't like Mark Twain?" is one I heard throughout my young womanhood. The shocked inquisitor was always male. This particular gender gap has its roots in the way our schools teach Twain. In my day, junior-high English classes read *Huckleberry Finn*, *Tom Sawyer*, and the story about the frog. Little girls despise little boys and frogs—the distinction is minimal at that age—so the damage is done. Whatever Twain we are forced to read in college invariably runs up against the pubertal mental block, so we spend the best years of our lives going around saying, "I can't stand Mark Twain."

Mark Twain: Collected Tales, Sketches, Speeches & Essays, 2 vols. (Library of America, 2,126 pp., $70)

I changed my mind in my thirties when I began to prefer non-fiction to novels and discovered Twain's essays. All of my old favorites, as well as some new ones, are contained in this superbly presented collection.

These books are secular bibles for our times—and not merely because they are printed on elegantly thin paper. Bill Clinton's living obituary is contained in the 1901 essay "Corn-Pone Opinions," a dissection of the man who "can't bear to be outside the pale; can't bear to be in disfavor; can't endure the averted face and the cold shoulder; wants to stand well with friends, wants to be smiled upon, wants to be welcome, wants to hear the precious words 'he's on the right track!' "

The trendy masses out buying the movie edition of *The Last of the Mohicans* should first read Twain's critique of Fenimore Cooper, who "saw nearly all things as through a glass eye, darkly," and hid his lack of inventiveness under tired plot tricks.

"A favorite one was to make a moccasined person tread in the tracks of the moccasined enemy, and thus hide his own trail. Cooper wore out barrels and barrels of moccasins in working that trick." Another was the broken twig. "It is a restful chapter in any book of his when somebody doesn't step on a dry twig and alarm all the

Miss King's latest book is With Charity Toward None *(St. Martin's).*

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reds and whites for two hundred yards around. Every time a Cooper person is in peril, and absolute silence is worth four dollars a minute, he is sure to step on a dry twig."

Examining *The Deerslayer*, which he calls "a literary *delirium tremens*," Twains reckons that on a single page, Cooper scored 114 literary offenses out of a possible 115—a record. Of the 19 rules governing the writing of romantic fiction, Cooper violated 18—another record. Among the latter: "The talk . . . shall have a discoverable meaning, also a discoverable purpose, and a show of relevancy, and remain in the neighborhood of the subject in hand, and be interesting to the reader, and help out the tale, and stop when the people cannot think of anything more to say."

Cooper strained credulity, both out of ignorance and to suit his plot needs. In the shooting match in *The Pathfinder*, the hero hits the head of a nail driven into a tree from a hundred yards away, making him, says Twain, "a man who could hunt flies with a rifle." On another occasion, six Indians who have managed somehow to hide in a "sapling" overhanging a river try to drop silently onto a passing boat, and all six miss; "the difference between a Cooper Indian and the Indian that stands in front of the cigar shop is not spacious."

In sum: "There have been daring people in the world who claimed that Cooper could write English, but they are all dead now."

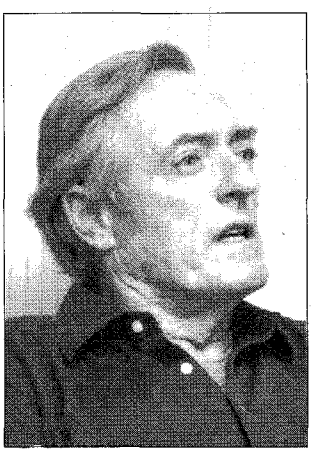
Twain believed in women's equality as long as it sprang from the kind of specialness he detected in Joan of Arc, "easily and by far the most extraordinary person the human race has ever produced." What he could not abide were mediocrities, the Eleanor Smeals and Gloria Steinems of his day, whose bollixed logic he satirized in a mock letter to the editor from a typical suffragette:

> For long years I have collected buttons, and door-plates and dictionaries, and all such things as I thought would make the poor savages of the South Seas contented with their lot and lift them out of their ignorance and degradation—and no longer than a month ago I sent them Horace Greeley's speeches and some other cheerful literature, and the pure delight I felt was only marred by the reflection that the poor creatures could not read them—and yet I may not vote!

He was devastatingly prescient about the feminization of politics that we call "negative campaigning." If women entered public life, he predicted, they "would go straight for each other's private moral character . . . it would be an established proposition that every women in the state was 'no better than she ought to be.'" The future slogans he imagines ("Vote for Judy McGinniss, the incorruptible! Nine children—one at the breast!") are close to present truth, and his anticipation of the blow-dried candidate has been realized: "And also in that day the man who hath beautiful whiskers shall beat the homely man of wisdom for Governor, and the youth who waltzes with exquisite grace shall be Chief of Police, in preference to the man of practiced sagacity and determined energy."

For peerless political incorrectness try "The Noble Red Man" (1870), which describes the Indian:

> His "wisdom" conferred upon an idiot



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would leave that idiot helpless indeed. . . . All history and honest observation will show that the Red Man is a skulking coward and a windy braggart . . . a creature devoid of brave or generous qualities, but cruel, treacherous, and brutal. During the Pi-Ute war the Indians often dug the sinews out of the backs of white men before they were dead. (The sinews are used for bowstrings.) But their favorite mutilations cannot be put into print. Yet it is this same Noble Red Man who is always greeted with a wail of humanitarian sympathy from the Atlantic seaboard whenever he gets into trouble; the maids and matrons throw up their hands in horror at the bloody vengeance wreaked upon him, and the newspapers clamor for a court of inquiry to examine into the conduct of the inhuman officer who inflicted the little pleasantry upon the "poor abused Indian." (They always look at the matter from the abused-Indian point of view, never from that of the bereaved white widow and orphan.)

A last word is in order. Since few of us are in top form on our deathbeds, Twain writes in "The Last Words of Famous Men," we should prepare a memorable clincher ahead of time. His suggestion for Secretary of State Seward: "Alas!—ka." □

FILM

Antiestablishmentarians

JOHN SIMON

ON BROADWAY, ***A Few Good Men*** proved good, gripping boulevard fare, albeit a great wide way from art; I wish that at least that much could be claimed for the movie version. But thanks to the adaptation by Aaron Sorkin, the playwright himself (with an assist, we hear, from William Goldman), and the direction by Rob Reiner, just about everything that could go wrong did; even so, the movie, based on an actual incident, should not be dismissed by those who missed the play: it could have some educational value for people who depend on movies for their education. (Their numbers may well be legion.)

Two Marines from the U.S. Navy base at Guantánamo Bay are on trial in a Washington military court for the murder of another marine, Pfc. Santiago, to whom they administered a supposedly unordered Marine Corps hazing (Code Red), in the course of which they allegedly stuffed a poisoned rag into Santiago's mouth. With a weak heart, and unable to keep up with Marine rigors in a subtropical climate, Santiago—denied a transfer by the fanatical commanding officer, Colonel Nathan Jessep (even though his adjutant recommended it)—has been writing desperate letters to influential Washingtonians, offering to reveal details of an illegal "fence-line shooting" at a Cuban watchtower in exchange for his transfer. One of the accused killers is Corporal Dawson, a gung-ho black Marine, fiercely dedicated to the code of "unit, corps, God, and country." The other is his taciturnly reverential, possibly slow-witted sidekick, Pfc. Downey.

The Navy assigns to their defense Lieutenant (j.g.) Daniel Kaffee, a snide young man 15 months out of Harvard Law School, the son of a legendary Navy lawyer, and himself a brilliant plea bargainer, a talent he is expected to use here. And so he intends, preferring to shine on a softball field rather than grub away in a courtroom. He assumes the men to be guilty; not so Lieutenant Commander JoAnne Galloway, an attractive, idealistic Navy lawyer, likewise assigned to the case, though in a less important capacity, who believes in their innocence. The third member of the defense team, Lieutenant Sam Weinberg, Kaffee's friend and an expert at research, perceives the accused as unsavory American equivalents of Nazi soldiers blindly executing grisly orders, but believes in justice for them all the same.

Gradually, thanks to JoAnne's dedication, Jessep's manifest amorality and near-dementia, and the keenness of his own intelligence once aroused, Kaffee goes into action—spurred on also by Corporal Dawson's contempt for the seeming time-server assigned to defend him. Many aspects of military life get touched on lightly—too lightly—as the movie works up to the climax even the converted Kaffee long resisted: an apparently unequal confrontation between himself and the much-decorated model martinet, Jessep. There are veiled allusions to the uneasy interrelations among different ethnic groups, to the ambiguities of men and women together in uniform, to the conflict between robotic obedience and high-risk personal morality, to the differences between branches of service (the more relaxed Navy, the more fanatical Marines), to latent homosexuality (Downey's feelings for Dawson), and so on.

Yet all this impinges only very shadowily on the proceedings, which in the play at least were not further diluted with Rob Reiner's irrelevant inferiority feelings toward his famous father, superimposed on the movie version. Sorkin's real aim was simple: a good yarn and plenty of excitement, which he duly delivered on stage with the help of a better director, Don Scardino, and a generally more believable cast. Tom Hulce, though no favorite of mine, was a more credible Kaffee than pretty-boy Tom Cruise, whose high-pitched voice has to be electronically transposed downward to make it aurally palatable, and whose acting has an inescapably gee-whiz quality about it. Demi Moore, as JoAnne Galloway, gives an earnest, balanced performance, but she lacks the fetching spontaneity of the actress who, on Broadway, played the part so well that the playwright married her.

The movie's biggest loss is the absence of Steven Lang, who made Jessep into an absolutely persuasive, bone-chillingly scary, and ultimately pathetic monster. But Hollywood wanted a "name," and got it in Jack Nicholson. What made Lang so fine was that, even though unhinged, he had the unfussy, self-assured dementia that might do for a potential trouble spot such as Guantánamo, where a maniac who identifies himself with the safety of the nation might find favor even with judicious heads. Nicholson, however, who recycles his Joker from *Batman*, comes across frequently laughable, full of jeering malevolence, as one using his power for some insidious, perverse purpose of his own. Instead of the intended Creon figure, we get a sinister mountebank, whose patent anomaly lets the system

Mr. Simon, NR's film critic, is also theater critic for New York *magazine.*

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off the hook. Thus Sorkin's Antigone—Kaffee—is reduced from a potential reformer to a mere jolly giant-killer.

One thing the movie makes abundantly clear is that Rob Reiner has an excellent reason for feeling inferior to his (not all *that* wonderful) father: Rob is a hack director. The concatenation of three shots in which we see Kaffee meditating in the shadow of the Jefferson Memorial while a hammy sunset haloes his head is a good example of the film's shopworn aesthetics. Perhaps the best thing in it is the solid performance by Kiefer Sutherland as Lieutenant Kendrick, the executive arm of Jessep's Machiavellianism, and the ominous reminder that the Jesseps of this world are self-perpetuating, even if the film's happy ending would have us believe otherwise. Even the final irony—that Dawson and Downey are saved in a way they don't want to be—is all but lost in Reiner and Sorkin's sanitizing glibness.

■ If *A Few Good Men* halfheartedly questions the sacrosanctness of the military establishment, ***Lorenzo's Oil*** does much better with the medical establishment (including the FDA), sensibly allowing the antagonist some dignity and credibility in wrongheadedness. This is the story of a married couple, the Italian economist Augusto Odone and his Irish-American linguist wife, Michaela, whose sweet five-year-old son, Lorenzo, starts weirdly misbehaving at school for reasons neither his teachers nor his parents can fathom. After much parental anxiety and medical befuddlement, one doctor makes the correct diagnosis: adrenoleukodystrophy (ALD), an ailment that was as yet very little known in 1984, and for which no therapy existed. The Odones are directed to Washington and Dr. Nikolais, the leading expert on ALD; but all he can do is describe and explain how the patient—always a boy to whom the mother, herself unaffected, transmits the malady—will lose more and more of his faculties, and, in two years, die. Already Lorenzo is suffering from loss of speech and hearing.

I shan't go into the etiology of ALD here, or into the vain attempts at combatting it by Dr. Nikolais and others. The film, directed by the Australian George Miller, himself a physician by training, explains it all very well, without boring and losing the audience. There are visual aids for every theoretical discussion, and the way Miller and his co-scenarist Nick Enright dramatize the sessions with sundry doctors and the diverse ineffectual experiments inflicted on Lorenzo is always lucid, dispassionate, and profoundly affecting; Miller's background as director of the Mad Max action films may have come in handy.

The Odones refuse to take no for an answer. They won't take it from the doctors, and keep reading medical books and journals until they find some useful hints in related research. They don't take it from nurses, as they fire any who won't do the utmost even in seemingly useless care. They won't take it from the government, as they go abroad—to England—for a certain acid that the FDA will not authorize. They won't take it from their own human limitations: performing their other work and duties, they still find the time and strength to give Lorenzo round-the-clock love and care; they stretch their brain power, puzzling out answers to why certain enzymes are shirking *their* duty by the boy. With crayons and boards and diagrams, with paper clips representing molecules, with tired but persevering minds, they go over the same problems, the same lack of answers, again and again. And they certainly don't take no from the ALD support group, headed by a married couple advocating resignation and compliance with the doctors. Instead of going along with them, the Odones proclaim their

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defiance at the meetings and gain the adherence of another doughty mother.

They have one further, major ally: little Lorenzo himself; with almost superhuman strength, he helps them fight the illness. Even when reduced to an apparent vegetable, he refuses to comply with ALD's supposedly irreversible schedule, and becomes an inspiration to his parents in their struggle. But united as the Odones are against the world, they—understandably enough—sometimes take things out on each other. Yet when one of them temporarily weakens, there is always the other to carry on for both. And Michaela's sister, Deirdre, proves a substantial ally, even though at one point, when—rationally, persuasively—she advocates giving up, she, too, is temporarily banished by her implacable sister.

Step by exhausting step, these no's begin to add up to an enormous yes, as the Odones reverse the path of ALD, and various members of the worlds of business, medicine, and other sciences come to their aid. The story is full of human interest in the best—most unsentimental and, therefore, most moving—sense. It is a remarkable display of what a father's predominantly intellectual passion and a mother's overwhelmingly emotional one can, as complementary equals, do to keep a child alive, and, beyond that, help discover what promises to be a complete cure for a previously fatal illness.

Nick Nolte has obsessively studied Augusto Odone's accent and movements from tapes, and has worked for months with an Italian teacher and a dialect coach. Augusto himself has declared Nolte's accent "just right." I am sorry to have to dissent, but the actor does not convince me with his fine Italian ham—visually, vocally, or histrionically (by which I don't mean histrionics); but I do appreciate his effort. Conversely, Susan Sarandon is entirely persuasive as Michaela, in a performance that, well-nigh miraculously, manages to be both no-holds-barred and subtly controlled. It is uplifting to contemplate how the enchanting sexpot of *Joe* (1970) has evolved into one of our finest dramatic actresses and has, in her last half-dozen movies, proved no less remarkable for her incisiveness than for her range.

Peter Ustinov contributes a nice, understated performance as Dr. Nikolais, who embodies both the strengths and the limitations of the medical establishment, and there is good supporting work from Gerry Bamman, Margo Martindale, Maduka Steady, and James Rebhorn and Ann Hearn as the unctuously superior couple who, prudently and purblindly, make the ALD support group ineffectual. I have difficulties with Kathleen Wilhoite as Deirdre, but this may have to do with her looks rather than with her acting. A special word of commendation for young Zack O'Malley Greenburg, who endures the physically difficult role of Lorenzo with exemplary fortitude and finesse.

Under George Miller's efficacious direction, all technical elements fuse flawlessly, though the production design of Kristi Zea must be praised as *primus inter pares*. I recommend this film especially to those who might deludedly avoid it as "depressing." □

THEATER

Fool's Paradox

EVA RESNIKOVA

Alan Nahigian

DAVID MAMET's latest play, *Oleanna* (the infelicitous title refers to a fool's paradise), now at the Orpheum Theater, has been touted in several quarters as a response to the issues raised in last year's Clarence Thomas–Anita Hill hearings. But the connection turns out to be spurious: not only did the real-life hearings make for more gripping theater than Mamet's gerrymandered play, but *Oleanna* is not even primarily about sexual harassment.

Nor is it about the inherent ambiguity of spoken and gestural language, which balloons alarmingly when the interlocutors are of opposite sexes (witness the phenomenal success of Deborah Tannen's *You Just Don't Understand*) and could very well lead a woman to believe she has been sexually harassed when the man intended nothing of the sort. This scenario is one that Mamet, with his intense interest in language and its failures, might have explored with profit.

Instead, he has written a play that sets forth his theory of sexual anger. According to Mamet, women are angry at men because of the power they wield by virtue of their sex, but women refuse to acknowledge this unpleasant emotion, thus placing themselves on a higher moral ground. Men, in turn, are angry at women for this deception, but men must suppress their anger in order to function in civilized society. This mutual anger explodes when the delicate balance of deception and suppression is upset by the intrusion into these personal sexual politics of a nebulous radical–feminist "group."

Mamet's play has elicited heated reactions not because of his subject matter, but because of the guile with which he sets up and manipulates the characters and the action. He purports to present an ambiguous situation in a balanced manner and then asks the audience to make up their own minds, based on the evidence. (To underscore this, there are even separate-but-equal versions of the *Playbill*, one with a man, the other a women on the cover, each with a target superimposed on his or her chest.)

But a play is not a trial, with a prosecutor and a defender each working to make his case. It is not even a hearing, with witnesses on each side presenting evidence. In a play, one person—the playwright—gets to create

Miss Resnikova's theater and dance reviews have appeared in NR, *the* New York Observer, *and* The New Criterion.

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and select all the evidence. In *Oleanna*, Mamet has even eliminated any possibility of leavening through directorial or thespian intervention by taking on the role of director himself and casting compliant actors—his wife, Rebecca Pidgeon, and Mamet veteran William H. Macy—who dutifully fulfill his dictum on the role of the actor: "to accomplish *beat by beat*, as simply as possible, the specific action set out for [him] by the script and the director"—in this case, the director being identical with the script. It is in this airless kangaroo court that the action unfolds, and the answer to the unspoken question "Who is the real victim?" is never seriously in doubt.

Perhaps Mamet thought he was presenting his characters as equals by making them both thoroughly unsympathetic. John is a fortyish college professor—mildly pedantic, mildly vain, conventionally insincere (his repetitions of "I love you, too" on the telephone to his wife elicited the biggest laugh of the evening)—on the brink of gaining tenure, and with it the upward mobility of homeownership and private school for his son. Carol is a dim, mousy student who shows up at his office to complain that she hasn't understood anything she has heard in the classroom or read in the assigned books all semester.

Though John assures Carol that she is "incredibly bright," we are never given any indication of intelligence behind the vague, whiny complaints, either from her or from him. On the contrary, the only evidence of her scholarship is a line that John reads from an essay she has written: "I think that the ideas contained in this work express the author's feelings in a way that he intended, based on his results." At the end of the evening, when one tots up the character flaws, John emerges as a well-meaning fool, while Carol is an emotional terrorist who has no qualms about destroying not only John but his innocent wife and child as well.

Sometime between the first and second scene, Carol undergoes a character change too radical to be explained away simply as the result of her having fallen into the clutches of her "group." (This undermotivated volteface is the greatest flaw in the play and remains a serious stumbling block to the suspension of disbelief.) Suddenly articulate, she is permitted to make a few valid points about John's unconscious sexism—though that a baby-boomer academic with a liberal bent would use the phrase "good men and true" to describe a tenure committee that includes a woman is a clumsy dramatic contrivance. However, these points are rendered trivial by the sheer looniness of her later charge of attempted rape. In this uneven contest, is it any wonder that, especially given the demographics of even the off-Broadway theater-going public, it is the middle-aged, middle-class family man John who engages the audience's sympathy?

Indeed, Mamet works up the audience into a state of such righteous indignation that John's final outburst of physical violence is made to seem, if not justifiable, well, then, somehow *understandable*. But his exhilaration is brief. By getting John to beat her up, Carol has won by losing (the ulti-

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mate in female passive-aggressiveness): she has gotten him to seal his own doom. "Yes, that's right," are her—and the play's—final words.

On another theatrical occasion, in another time, another professor who offered to give special instruction to an ignorant young woman was driven to complain, "Why can't a woman be more like a man?" Mamet seems to share both Professor Higgins's frustration and his solution. What Mamet doesn't share with Higgins (the 1950s musicalized version, that is, not Shaw's) is his grumpy charm and self-deprecating humor. There is no room for charm or humor in the fool's paradise of *Oleanna* or the politically correct dystopia imagined by Carol. And therein lies the clear and present danger in the current war between the sexes. □

DELECTATIONS

Of Turkey and Tradition

LINDA BRIDGES

THE distaste my colleague Digby Anderson feels for traditional Anglo-American holiday food [see his "Rescue Hampers" in our last issue] is understandable: he grew up, poor man, in England at a time when its culinary standards, always debatable, had been held under water by years of rationing. These childhood traumas can be hard to overcome.

Robert Prince

Mr. Anderson proposes to rescue modern Anglos by converting them to a wonderful tradition—the Mediterranean—which, however, is foreign to them. I propose instead rediscovering our own traditions as they should be.

And we need some rediscovery, even on our side of the Anglo-American connection. Back in the days before Harriet Nelson and June Cleaver gave way to Joan Baez and Betty Friedan, middle-class American children knew the agonizing delight ("Mommy, when will it be *done*?") of the smell of roasting turkey, mingled with butter and onions and sage, followed by the appearance of the bronze-skinned bird, with a chance, if cook and carver were indulgent, to nobble a bit of the skin while it was at its crispest.

Now, thanks to Yankee ingenuity and technological advance, a substantial portion of that generation's offspring have never known the same joys. First there was that diabolical contraption, the roasting bag, which seemed a godsend to women who cared too much about their housekeeping to let a greasy oven go uncleaned, but were too lazy, or too busy, to clean it directly after Thanksgiving and Christmas. Unfortunately, the bag yields not roast but steamed turkey, its skin damp and pallid, the meat rubbery, and with no nice brown sludge at the bottom of the pan to make gravy of. The other contrivance is the microwave. I'm told the fancier ones have a browning tray, which is meant to make it just as good as an oven. But remember Burnham's Third Law: "Just as good, isn't." Even the authors of microwave columns in newspapers now advise that microwaving ruins the texture of the meat; but by the time the first enthusiastic microwavers discovered that, they were as likely to give up on the turkey as the microwave.

They are abetted in their defection by the food writers who, frantically trying not just to repeat last year's column, encourage their readers to try something new and exciting this holiday season. I remember one such writer brightly suggesting that a whole cod stuffed with brown rice would be as festive as a turkey, while appealing to the vegetarians in your family.

Even if the suggested alternative were more reasonable, this still mistakes one type of art for another—creating for performing. A playwright, a songwriter, a choreographer can only *create* a particular work once; but if it is a success, the actors, singers, dancers will want to perform it many times. So a chef or a cookbook writer can create (or, in the case of traditional dishes, codify) a work only once, but in his role of cook he will produce it often. Even so sensible a woman as the English food writer Jane Grigson can fall prey to confusion in this regard. In *Good Things*, she tells how her family set her straight: "As we're not Christmas-pudding eaters, finding it too bulky, too unrefreshing after the turkey course, we've made our own tradition of this cold lemon soufflé. I've tried to vary the recipe by adding orange juice and peel, by altering the amount of eggs and cream, but it's no good. Everyone says, 'Yes, this is nice, but please next year may we have our

Miss Bridges is NR's managing editor.

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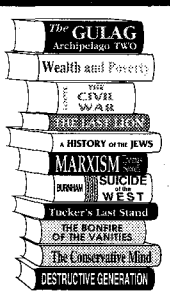

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proper lemon soufflé again?' " Out of the 365 dinners available each year, there is plenty of room to be adventurous without mucking about with the handful of traditional holiday meals.

Not that everyone has to have the *same* tradition. Apart from individual contrarians—like the Grigsons with their soufflé; or a friend of mine who, disliking turkey, started a mini-tradition of serving beef Wellington with TURKEY spelled out in pastry cutouts on the top—there are all the other genuine ethnic traditions. Many of these are rooted in church discipline, even if the churches are no longer strict about such things. The eels of Digby Anderson's adopted Neapolitan Christmas Eve, and the *lutefisk* of my parents' Scandinavian one, are equally rooted in the meatless vigil of a feast day. (By the way, don't believe what you have read about *lutefisk*—dried cod treated, however improbable it sounds, with lye—in the *Wall Street Journal*. Bob Bartley's childhood trauma is even more understandable than Digby Anderson's, since overcooked *lutefisk* can be nastily slimy. But if cooked properly, and served with lots of melted butter, and accompanied by the heavenly *lefse*, a griddle bread that's like the apotheosis of a *tortilla*, it's something that you can happily give 0.3 per cent of your annual dinner allotment to.)

So before the feast day comes the vigil—and after the feast day come: the leftovers. On most questions, it is said, there are two kinds of people in the world, but on this one I detect three. First are those who regard leftovers as a grim duty, and in consequence either settle in for the unpleasantest week of the year or refuse to cook a turkey in the first place, though they will gladly eat it at someone else's house. Second are those who love cold turkey and plan the size of their bird vis-à-vis the size of their holiday dinner party so that the last of the meat is eaten before it starts to dry out. Third are those who, while also fond of cold turkey, are aware that, as the American food writer Michael Field put it, the world's cuisines are full of dishes—"never considered 'leftover' dishes by their creators in the sense in which we disparagingly use the term today"—that "demanded previously cooked food as a base." Having made friends with one item, anyway, of modern technology, the freezer, they can choose a large enough turkey to yield several more dishes in coming months. This is just as well, since turkeys nowadays are bred for bigger breasts, so if you want a reasonable amount of dark meat you can't buy a tiny bird (I find a 14-to-16-pound Tom is about right). Most of the turkey dishes given by Mr. Field in his *Classics and Improvisations*, like a serene and lovely Turkey Tetrazzini (no relation to the dish of the same name committed by college cafeterias), use only white meat, but dark meat is needed for Mrs. Grigson's Pulled and Devilled Turkey. The dark meat is coated with a devil sauce and then run under the broiler to brown, while the white meat, pulled apart into smallish pieces, is gently reheated in an unthickened cream sauce. With its mustard and Worcestershire sauce and cayenne pepper, this dish might even appeal to Mr. Anderson—and if he still wanted to send a rescue hamper, a spot of Roquefort would go nicely afterward. □

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Black Dogs, by Ian McEwan (Doubleday, 149 pp., $19.50)

THIS fascinating, complicated short novel is in the form of an Englishman's memoir of an incident in the life of his mother-in-law—an attack on her by two black dogs on a French road during her honeymoon at the end of World War II. At the time, Jenny is married to a Cambridge Stalinist, and both of them are apparently bound on a bleak career as upper-class Communists. But the attack jolts her so badly that her marriage degenerates into cold, cranky quarreling. Bernard, her husband, remains a Stalinist, while Jenny is converted to a sort of Continental mysticism. If this sounds like the makings of one of those novels with anti-Americanism and memories of dreary English childhoods as alternating themes, it is not. Ian McEwan does a remarkable job of humanizing his tale. He follows the marriage for forty years, from after the war to the collapse of the Wall in 1989, which finds Bernard walking the ruins of Berlin and making excuses for Communism and himself. McEwan never hesitates to present the stark dichotomies at the

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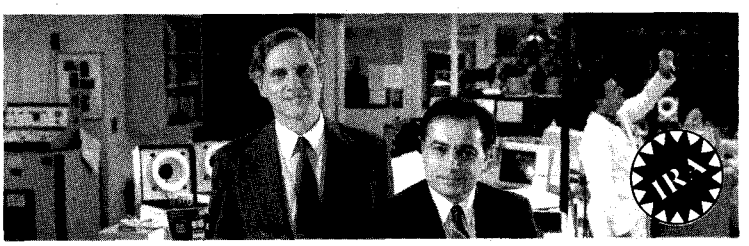

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heart of his story, yet it is told in such a strange, subtle manner that has the ring of conviction.Like Anthony Powell, McEwan beats back the frontier of British intellectual folly, always an accomplishment. —LAWRENCE DUGAN

Ota Benga: The Pygmy in the Zoo, by Phillips Verner Bradford and Harvey Blume (St. Martin's, 281 pp., $22.95)

S. V. Phillips was an explorer and opportunist who found a pygmy named Ota Benga in Africa and exhibited him scandalously at the Bronx Zoo in 1906. After he abandoned Benga, the pygmy (his name Americanized to "Otto Bingo" for purposes of anonymity) lived in Virginia, where he committed suicide in 1916. While Phillips's shady adventures in Africa read like a Peter Weir film in miniature, the twenty pages of Bronx material—Benga fell victim to a cruel zoo publicity scheme—are handled with less zest. But as a kind of African counterpart to Luc Sante's *Low Life*, a charming hodgepodge of trivia, the book is irresistible. We learn that, until the First World War, state laws prohibited American blacks from playing the drums; that professional veterans of the Boer and Zulu wars made money by re-enacting their battles on the beach at Coney Island; that the turn-of-the-century *New York Times* mockingly referred to members of the black clergy as "our reverend colored brothers." Reticently subtitled *One Man's Degradation in Turn-of-the-Century America*, the book is not really *about* Ota Benga. Mainly, it's a vehicle for Bradford to retail stories about his granddad, S. V. Phillips. Bradford nominates Ota Benga for many firsts ("first pygmy tourist in America," etc.), but really he's just the first person to have been exploited by two members of the same family, for the same reason, ninety years apart.
—DAVID LIPSKY

Zealots for Zion: Inside Israel's West Bank Settlement Movement, by Robert I. Friedman (Random House, 249 pp., $22.50)

WHILE FEW issues are more deserving of book-length examination than Israel's home-building policies in the West Bank, this is definitely not the book.

(Continues on page 61)

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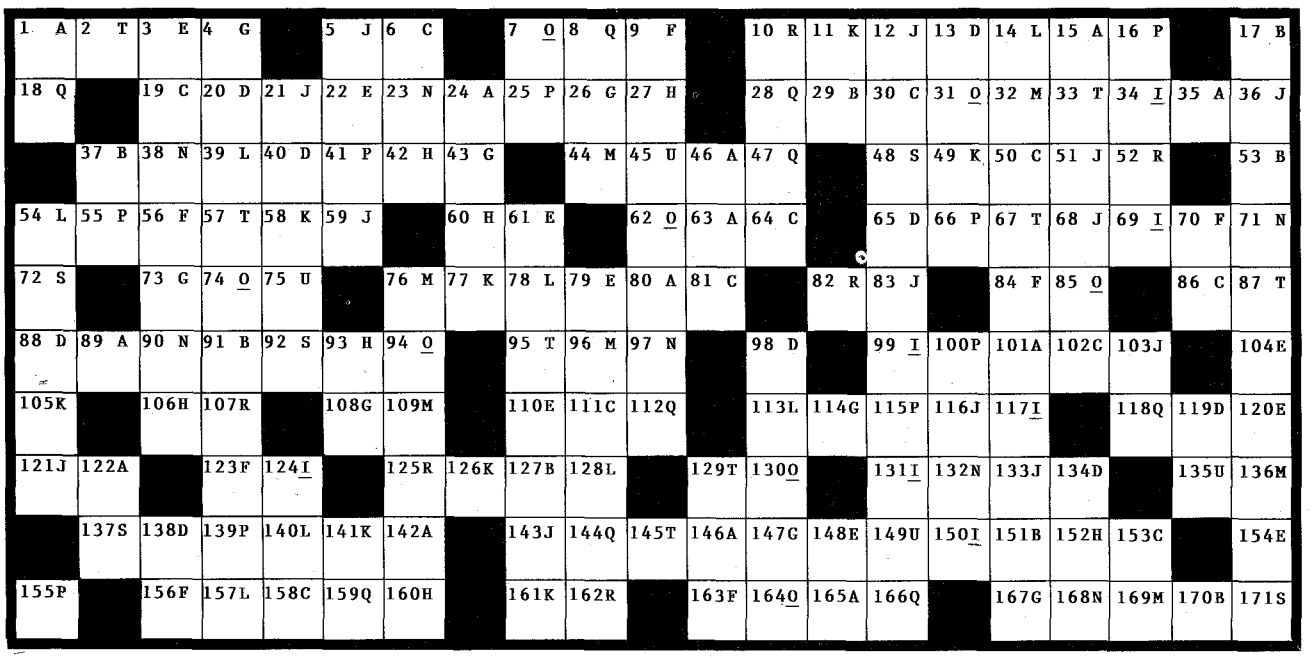
TRANS-O-GRAM / Kem Putney



DEFINITIONS

A. Exaggeration — 89 101 46 142 80 1 146 122 63 24 / 165 35 15

B. Illuminating part of the street scene — 127 170 29 53 37 17 91 151

C. Offering nothing — 64 50 30 6 153 111 102 86 158 19 / 81

D. Self-evident — 138 20 119 40 65 98 134 13 88

E. Dietitian's concern — 120 79 104 22 148 110 154 3 61

F. A little odd, rhythmically speaking — 156 163 56 84 9 70 123

G. Painter of Americana — 114 108 147 4 73 167 43 26

H. If afire, it has volumes of smoke — 152 60 106 160 42 93 27

I. Bric-a-brac's home — 99 131 34 117 150 124 69

J. Means to pleasure — 121 103 83 143 12 36 5 68 133 59 / 51 116 21

K. Libertine — 141 105 161 77 11 58 126 49

L. Liberal's ort? — 128 54 113 140 78 39 14 157

M. Stay — 76 136 44 96 169 32 109

N. Escort's escort — 90 168 132 38 97 23 71

O. Type of canine — 164 94 85 62 130 31 7 74

P. Fame — 155 115 41 100 55 66 25 139 16

Q. For *NR*, it's two weeks (2 words) — 47 8 159 118 144 166 28 18 112

R. Call upon — 82 52 10 162 125 107

S. Extra-constitutional rule (hyph.) — 137 72 171 92 48

T. Southpaw kicker (2 words) — 67 87 95 129 145 57 2 33

U. Small island — 149 75 45 135

DIRECTIONS

The object of TRANS-O-GRAM is to fill in the puzzle diagram by guessing the words from their definitions, and transferring each letter of the guessed word to the correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. When the diagram is filled in it will spell out a quotation from some published work (reading normally from left to right, black boxes indicating the ends of words); also, when the words have all been filled in above, their initial letters will spell out the author and title of the quoted work. The acrostic feature, and the relative word-lengths in the diagram, will assist in the solution. Spelling and definitions on the authority of *Webster's New International Dictionary*, Second Edition.

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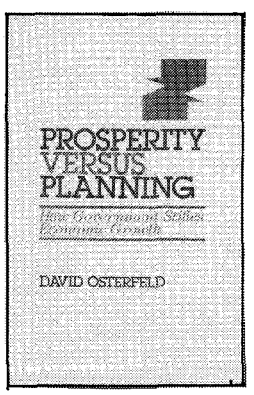

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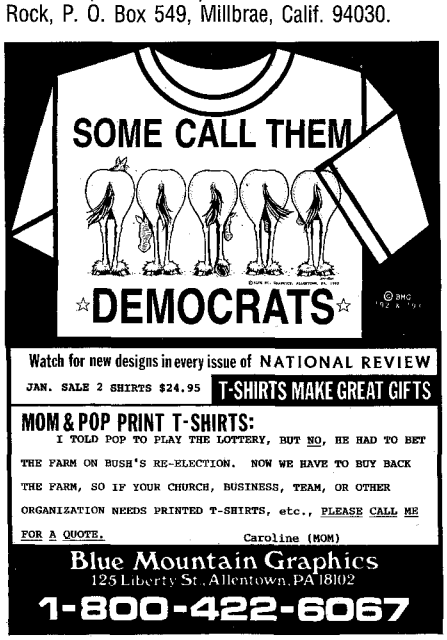
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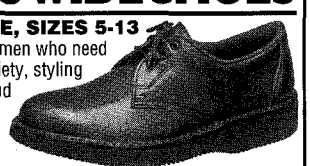
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CRANSTON

(Continued from page 46)

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MILL: I have never done so.

ACTON: But when you write, Mr. Mill, in support of Nationalism by saying that "it is a necessary condition of free institutions that the boundaries of government should coincide with those of nationality," you lend your authority to those who do not share your concern for personal freedom.

MILL: And when you write, Lord Acton, that "the combination of different nations in a State is as necessary a condition of the civilized life as the combination of men in society" you lend yourself to the service of imperialists who are seldom as liberal as you are. □

BRIEFS

(Continued from page 58)

Mixing factual error, prevarication, and propaganda, Robert Friedman of *The Village Voice* ardently opposes Israel's policies. Supporters of the Jewish state should indeed wish to re-assess the evolution of those policies. It would, for instance, be worth investigating whether—as George Bush and James Baker contend—Israeli settlements are the main obstacle to Arab-Israeli peace. But if that is so, why did the Syrians, Jordanians, and Palestinian Arabs—*after* forty years of refusing to do so—agree to direct bilateral talks with Israel just when the "intransigent" Yitzhak Shamir was prime minister? Why have West Bank Arabs hardened their bargaining positions and escalated anti-Jewish assaults, while Iranian-and Syrian-sponsored terrorism and drug trafficking in Lebanon increased, since Israeli elections brought the Labor Party back to power, promising cuts in Israeli settlement construction? You won't find such questions answered or even asked in this poisonous book.

—MICHAEL WIDLANSKI

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The Grammar Of Assent

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 7

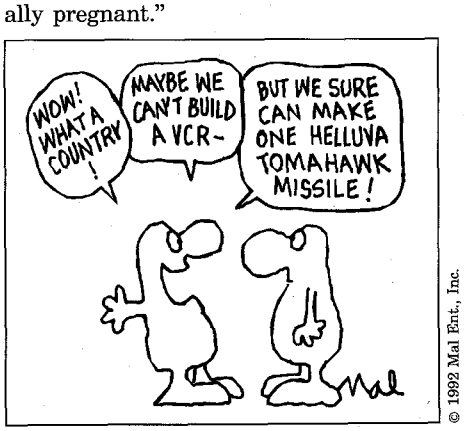
I have to confess that ever since Anita Hill happened I have been waiting, along with, I'd guess, ten million other males, for someone to write or say something about male–female banter that would restore a little perspective to the social scene. I'd have done it myself, except that it really did need to come from a woman to be entirely credible, and so we waited, for months . . . what seemed like years. And then on Friday, David Margolick of the *New York Times* wrote about Judge Maryanne Barry of the Federal District Court in New Jersey, the crowning line of whose speech delivered to nine hundred federal law-enforcement agents and officials in Washington was, "Where has the laughter gone?"

The disclaimers are both necessary and sincere. They are that most men vigorously oppose sexual "harassment" (as does Judge Barry). There is no question about it that if Anita Hill was telling the exact truth, she was indeed "harassed" by Clarence Thomas when he was her superior in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

But what happened as a result of the charges by Miss Hill was a metamorphosis in the meaning of the word "harassment" of a kind that threatened to alter the nature of heterosexual relations. Judge Barry was on the point. Because of a few "professional hypochondriacs," she said, "good and well-meaning men are afraid to be themselves, and the more serious problems women face in the work force remain unaddressed. . . . What is happening is that every sexy joke of long ago, every flirtation, is being recalled by some women and revised and re-evaluated as sexual harassment. Many of these accusations are, in anybody's book, frivolous. Frivolous accusations reduce, if not eliminate, not only communication between men and women but any kind of playfulness and banter."

One has to begin at the beginning, as though one were an androgynous Martian visiting the planet Earth for the first time and asking such questions as, How do men and women get to know each other well enough to make dates, let alone to agree to contract marriage? The kindergarten-Martian teacher would have to say something on the order of, "Well, the tradition is for the male to approach the female, rather than vice versa. And depending on the culture, the approach follows any of several lines. In some cultures, in some ages, introductions were made only by parents or guardians, and all joint activities were supervised. But in many modern cultures, the young men and the young women are left pretty much on their own, but still the convention is for the male to make the advances."

If asked just how such advances are made, the teacher would need to explain, "Well, it depends a great deal on the stylistic disposition of the man/boy who of course would be aware of the stylistic pre-inclinations of the woman/girl he was addressing. In some cases, flowers would be sent, with a little note. In days gone by, such notes were very often very formal. [I know of an ardent suitor in the Twenties who sent his equivalent of love-letters to his inamorata, signed, Yrs., Chas.] But these days," the teacher would go on, "there is a high degree of informality. Sometimes the ice is broken by the telling of off-color stories, usually by the man to the woman, but often the other way around. And . . . one thing leads to another, and eventually there is a scene at the altar, at which these days about 50 per cent of the brides are actually pregnant."



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Judge Barry was hardly endorsing Haight–Ashbury style effronteries. She related how she felt stung by the tongue-lashing one female lawyer gave her for calling a young woman a "girl." How would young women today treat it if the judge referred to them, informally, as girls? "Some visibly coil up like cobras, narrow their eyes and their mouths, and spit out some answer which usually includes the word, 'shocked.'"

Anybody surveying that article on Friday was confident that not more than a week would pass before Judge Barry was attacked by the Women's Pre-emptive Rights League. They'd have been right. The *New York Times*' Anna Quindlen fired at her 48 hours later, "I'm disappointed that Judge Barry perpetuated the nutty anti-feminist myth that the world is full of overbearing women who go berserk if you send them roses." But I bet if I sent roses tomorrow to Miss Quindlen she would be offended. It is really amazing what Romeo got away with in pursuing Juliet. □

Straw in the Wind

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 9

Now that the partisanship of the election is behind us, odd little things are happening. Consider, as an example, the first article in a series of four under the title, "The Push and Pull over Taxes." It is written for the *New York Times* by their Washington correspondent, David E. Rosenbaum, and down around 100 inches into the first story, one runs into the following: "One popular misconception is that the Republican tax cuts caused the crippling federal budget deficit, now approaching $300 billion a year. The fact is, the large deficit resulted because the government vastly increased what it spent each year, while tax revenues changed little."

Two things are interesting here. The first is that an economic truth which for several years needed to be passed about like a tablet in the catacombs, from pilgrim to pilgrim, shielded from the wrath of Caesar, should be pronounced now, in the chief Establishment paper, as routinely observable, like the temperature at noon yesterday. A second point is, of course, How is it that the data in question became a "popular misconception"? I have several times in the past few years uttered exactly the words quoted above from Mr. Rosenbaum in the presence of such as Professor John Kenneth Galbraith, or Senator George McGovern, evoking from them a firestorm of scorn &

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ridicule. Well, now that Mr. Clinton has been elected, it is safe to tell the truth: who knows, the myth of trickle-down economics may come next.

Meanwhile, we move on in Mr. Rosenbaum's series on taxes to read, "The wealthy now pay a higher proportion of total taxes than they did in 1980." What! . . . Say that *again*! The decade of greed, in which the rich helped themselves to the savings of the poor? The analysis goes on with a qualifier: "But their share of total income has grown even more than their share of the tax burden." The Republican Party can certainly live with that: When Reagan was President, more people became wealthy.

But put this in context of contemporary economic discussion. Mr. Lester Thurow, a Democratic divinity whose oracle is housed at MIT, wrote last summer that "Americans are not overtaxed, they are undertaxed." He goes on: "Put bluntly, no one can balance the budget without a tax increase." That is true only on paper, and paper, under water, dematerializes. To raise $400 billion more revenue, we have come to understand, is more complicated than raising taxes by $400 billion. If a $400-billion tax increase results in businesses closing down and generates an unemployment rate of, let us say, 15 per cent, the tax increase disappears in your hands, and suddenly you find that added to your expenses are the expenses of looking after another eight million unemployed.

So that whereas the deficit that accumulated during the Reagan and Bush Administrations was the subject of great shock to Democratic pamphleteers, they are now nestling back down into the comfortable arms of neo-Keynesianism, with heavy emphasis on a new industrial policy that tells us to do something about the human infrastructure.

Professor Robert Eisner of Northwestern University, a learned gentleman who served as President of the American Economics Association and who campaigned for Clinton, asks himself: "What would pass an appropriate budget test? Raising taxes to reduce the deficit?" No. He does not believe that raising taxes at this point makes any sense. Not only that, he either conscripts or co-opts fellow economists into taking the same position. "Almost all recognize that this would only slow the economy more, in major part because it would leave individuals and/or businesses with even less purchasing power to fuel our growth."

But is he not worried about the deficit? He defines the deficit that is too large: That happens "if it causes spending to rise farther than our capacity to produce." Since our unemployment is at 7.2 per cent, we are not close to running the risk of inflationary overspending.

So stick your finger up and catch the drift of the political wind. What's going on? It says: Go easy on new spending, and except for the ritual, exhibitionistic slap at the rich, take special care not to tax the middle class. □

Coming Up: Hiss on Hiss

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 4

The *60 Minutes* people called to say they were planning a segment on Hiss–Chambers–Volkogonov and could they interview me as a friend of Chambers and I said sure, and spent an hour with *60 Minutes* reporter Steve Kroft. They hoped to run the segment on November 29, but it didn't play. A phone call: How come? Well, they wanted to include an interview with Tony Hiss, Alger's son, and he has . . . laryngitis. Well, would they be running it this coming Sunday? Depends on Hiss's laryngitis. Tony Hiss has a lot to be laryngitical about.

It isn't pleasant to go after a son or daughter who defends the honor of a parent. I remember when Julie Nixon Eisenhower substituted briefly for Mike Douglas on his old television show weeks after her father had been run out of town. In her interview with me she pleadingly asked whether I agreed that the Watergate evidence was clearly insufficient to precipitate her father's ouster, and I mumbled something emunctorily acquiescent and slithered out of the way of Watergate. Honor thy father and thy mother carries a lot of weight with me, but the immunity has to have limits, as Hamlet instructed us. Tony Hiss wrote for *The New Yorker*, under the rubric "Personal History," a long essay which is as dense a piece of disinformation as anything since *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. History as told by Tony Hiss (". . . my father's story was given a very public happy ending . . . too good to be true [that phrase, alone, was incontestable] . . . now they know that Alger Hiss was not a Communist, not a spy, not a traitor") has to be engaged as a matter of historical hygiene.

What brought it all on was the press conference held in New York on October 29 at which was produced the statement of General Dmitri Volkogonov to Hiss-agent John Lowenthal saying not only that the KGB files revealed no mention of Hiss as a spy for the Soviet Union, but also that they denied that Whittaker Chambers had been a spy.

It's true that the Hiss forces—led by my friend Leon Botstein, whose college (Bard) houses an Alger Hiss Chair of something or another, presumably sedition—attempted, after this, to light prairie fires about the country, but our guess is that the massive evidence establishing the guilt of Hiss augurs a period of protracted laryngitis among the exonerationists.

The general was recently here, giving testimony on prisoners of war. The *60 Minutes* people tried to get him for a quickie interview while he was visiting West Point, but Higher Authority kept that from happening, and indeed there is a rumor that the general's memory is not quite perfect. One has to remember that he has come a long way very quickly. Less than ten years ago he began one article in the *Soviet Military Review*: "In order to camouflage their attacks against detente and socialism the Western leaders, especially those in Washington, are spreading the pharisaical myth of some 'Soviet military threat.' For a full sixty years this myth has been kept and used in the inventory of bourgeois propaganda. What is the nature and the source of this, the biggest lie of the twentieth century?"

Meanwhile, Oleg Gordievsky, who was head of the KGB in London until his defection in 1985, lunched recently with British historian Alistair Horne, who writes to me, "Gordievsky disputes most emphatically that Volkogonov could possibly have found information on Hiss's innocence in the archives. He says, first of all, Volkogonov almost certainly has not had access to the KGB Archives, but only to the Central Committee Archives. If Hiss had been working for the KGB, there is absolutely no likelihood that the KGB would have revealed him to the Central Committee. This was reinforced by Dr. Christopher Andrew, the don at Cambridge who has made a career writing about intelligence, and who co-authored Gordievsy's book on the KGB." That book recorded that one lecture young Gordievsky, as a trainee for the KGB, had received during his training was from the KGB official who served as Hiss's controller during the war. Hiss, by the way, had the code name "Ales," according to historian Thomas Powers, writing in *The New York Review of Books*.

One is skeptical whether Tony Hiss will appear on *60 Minutes*. If he does, watch out for the possibility that he will challenge the Copernican system. □

(Universal Press Syndicate)

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Air Force Two, Anyone?

THE WALLS in my office bear a sad memorial to the fleetingness of all political triumphs. There are 16 nailholes, the legacy of the previous inhabitant, a fellow of about 26 hired as a presidential speechwriter last May and, through no fault of his own, jettisoned in July.

On Day Two of his White House sojourn I happened to wander in. A 24-hour frenzy of interior decoration had transformed an ample office into an elegant suite: newly requisitioned furniture, leather-bound volumes from home, framed degrees with a formidable array of plaques and certificates of merit, and signed pictures of the new occupant with the various Lords of the Earth—Presidents, governors, senators, a Hudson County supervisor—he had brushed up against in his rise to eminence.

You didn't have to be a wizened old Washington hand to survey this little shrine and tremble for him. Among the qualifications for survival in the White House, the nesting instinct is not the most reliable. It brought to mind Malcolm Muggeridge's image of the worldly optimist as the man busily constructing his dream house on the slopes of Mt. Etna.

Maybe because the world has refused to recognize my own innumerable contributions to mankind with even the paltriest plaque or citation, I often marvel at these displays—half in disgust, and half with the longing of an alley dog in search of scraps.

For memorabilia hounds, Washington is the butcher shop. In a file at home I too have a few pictures of myself hobnobbing with the renowned. Enough of them to make me the star at family gatherings, holding forth about my White House Years (well, okay—my White House 11 months), yet not quite enough to awaken colleagues here to the political giant in their midst. So instead I take the subtler approach of keeping the office completely unadorned and just a little disheveled—leaving visitors to wonder what burdens these walls might bear were I less attentive to substance.

Sometimes, though, you get the feeling these harmless vanities multiply in inverse proportion to one's usefulness. It's worth pondering how the campaign might have gone if some of the glory hounds here had brought to it as much zeal as they bring to their ongoing struggles for office space, if they had sought victory as they seek party invitations, or defended their President as ferociously as they guard their presidential cufflinks. We might all have borne the glorious burden another four years. A picture down in the lobby of the Old Executive Office Building, taken of Theodore Roosevelt around 1899 when he was Assistant Secretary of the Navy, reinforces the lesson: There's Teddy sitting at a plain desk, covered only with papers and a pen holder, in a spare, drab office—getting some real work done.

Nowadays the place is manned by a different breed of public servant. I think for instance of the guy who sat in the next office when I was assigned a temporary desk in the Office of Political Affairs. As the strategy man for the Southwestern states, he would accompany the President on trips to that region, and much of his time was spent on the phone haggling over which local big-shots would be allowed to ride on Air Force One: "That idiot—we let him on last time! . . . That a-- isn't stepping foot on the aircraft!"

"Life isn't fair—why aren't all those idiots who voted *for me in jail?"*

In between these delicate negotiations you could hear him complaining to colleagues about all those yokels out West begging for his petty favors. Meanwhile, his own office was adorned with three or four framed pictures of himself sitting on Air Force One, plastic cups and napkins from Air Force One, a model of Air Force One suspended from the ceiling, and—separately matted and framed—a seat-assignment card with his very own name and the words, "Welcome Aboard Air Force One."

WHAT'S alarming is that my disgust arises from the lure such vanities hold for me. My first thought on seeing that nifty miniature of AF1 ought to have been, "Hasn't this underling better things on his mind?" But that was my second thought. My first was, "Hmmm, where can I get one like that?"

The same impulse nearly overtook me the other day when a memo arrived announcing our last chance to buy Air Force Two windbreakers bearing an embroidered vice-presidential seal, with order forms attached. Actually, the windbreakers are pretty snappy looking—Dan Quayle himself wears them. Suddenly I saw myself, a few months from now, striding jauntily into a room, where an awed Republican temptress approaches to inquire how I came into this impressive raiment, her delicate hand reaching timidly to touch the official seal. ("Oh, just something from my White House years.") Only one somber fact prevented me from ordering two or three of them: I have never been Vice President.

It is well to remember such fine points. It's okay for the President or Vice President to sport the seal of office—a little goofy, maybe, but somehow endearing. But an underling is an underling, no matter how high the man he serves.

Indulge the illusion of second-hand prestige, and before long one becomes like my friend the tough-talking commander of Air Force One. Typical of his White House peers, he brought to politics only the greedy zeal of a hobbyist, with loyalty as fragile and prone to wind shifts as his little model airplane.

—MATTHEW SCULLY

Mr. Scully is a lameduck speechwriter for Vice President Quayle.

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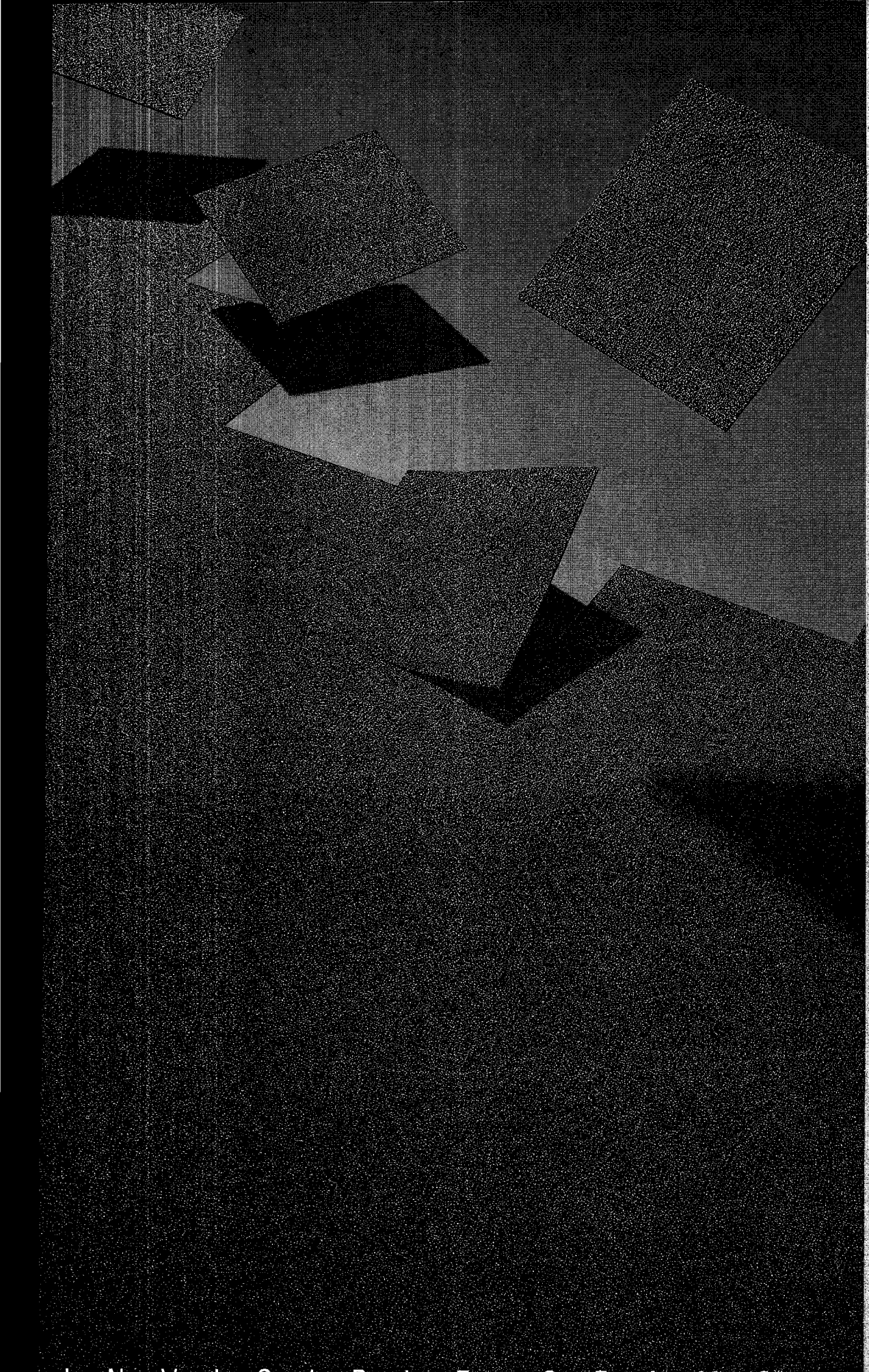

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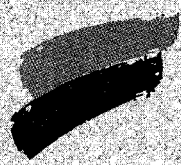

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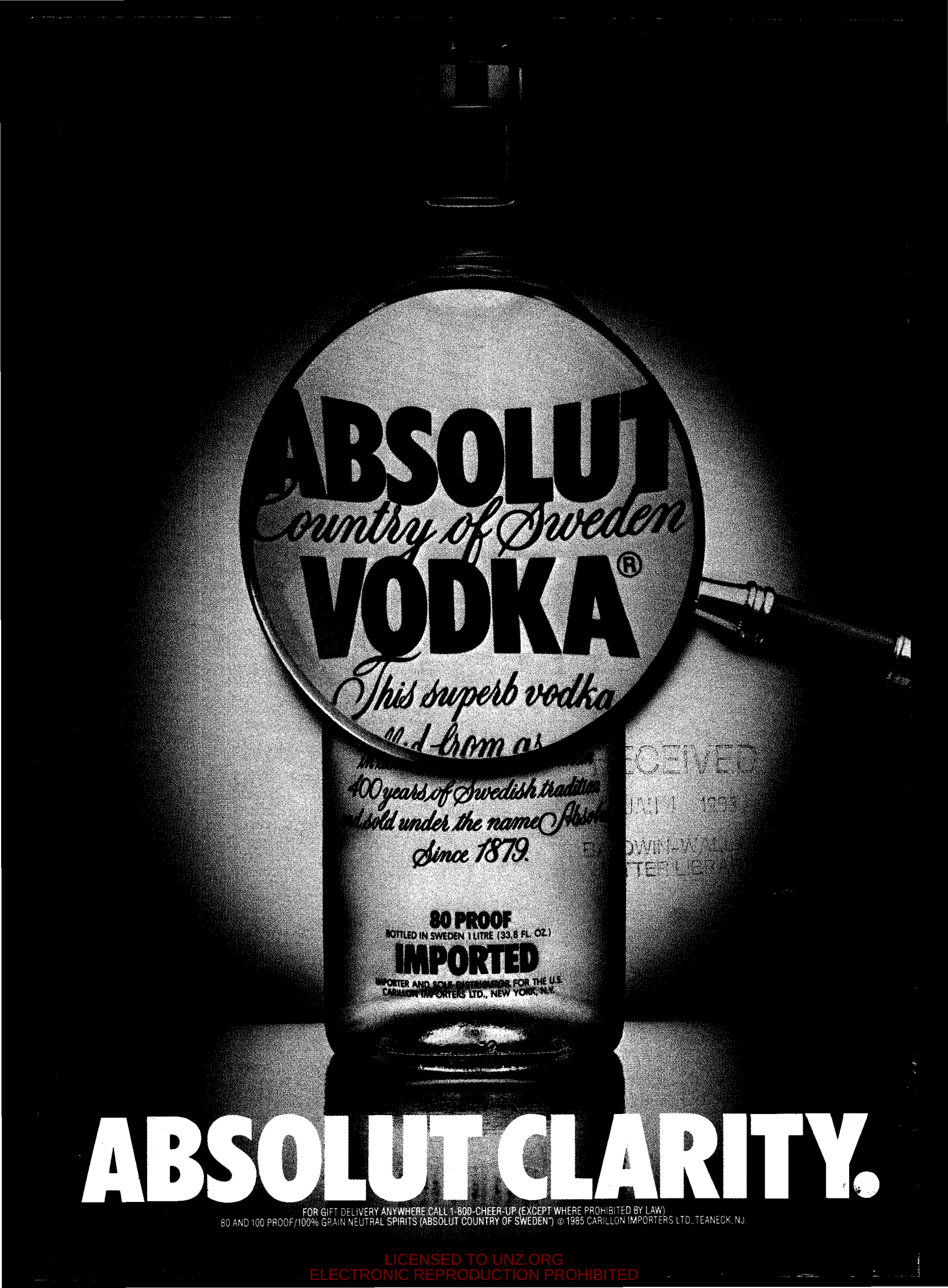
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